On This Date in Bahá'í Faith

AUGUST

96 Historical Entries

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1 August 1. On this date in 1851, Mullá Muḥammad-'Aliy-i-Zanjání, the leader of the Bábí revolt in Zanjan, was killed.

2 August 1. On this date in 1967, the UHJ wrote an individual believer "Concerning the question of display of the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh, the Guardian's instructions were that this should be done only with the utmost reverence, and then only on special occasions. While the Guardian did not ..."

3 August 1. On this date in 1996, "Deepen" magazine published an article titled "Flow of Divine Authority" by Brent Poirier addressing the question "What is the scriptural authority for the Universal House of Justice to function without the presence of the Guardian of the Cause?"

4 August 2. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Too great emphasis cannot be laid on the importance of the unity of the friends, for only by manifesting the greatness of their love for and patience with each other can they hope to attract large numbers to their ranks."

5 August 2. On this date in 1953, Fred Schechter arrived in Djibouti City for which he was named a Knight of Baha'u'llah for French Somaliland. He also travelled as a pioneer to several countries in Latin America and served thirteen years as a Continental Counsellor in the Americas and served on the

6 August 2. On this date in 1982, a letter written on behalf of the UHJ to the NSA of the Virgin Islands stated that "in the relationship between assistants and the National Spiritual Assembly no problems should arise, because the functions are entirely separate."

7 August 3. On this date in 1918, Amoz Gibson was born. He served on the UHJ from its founding in 1963 until his death. Before that served on the NSA of the U.S., an Auxiliary Board member for propagation, and a pioneer to the Navajo Indian Reservation.

8 August 3. On this date in 1935, a letter read "Shoghi Effendi, as you know, has been invariably encouraging the believers, both in the East and in the West, to make an intensive study of [Esperanto], and to consider it as an important medium for the spread of the Cause in international circles."

9 August 3. On this date in 1950, those attending a German and Austrian Bahá'í Youth Summer School wrote Shoghi Effendi, who responded that "only the remedy of the "Divine Physician" can solve the problems facing humanity and we work day and night to give the message of Bahá'u'lláh to the masses..."

10 August 3. On this date in 1960, two cables sent by the Custodians listed some of the prominent believers in Mason Remey's claim to the Guardianship, calling them "Remey's henchmen" and declaring them Covenant-breakers as well as "anyone associating (with) these people."

11 August 3. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to Kalimat Press "on the subject of the manner in which Kalimat has promoted to Bahá'ís Juan Cole's book, 'Modernity and the Millennium.'"

12 August 4. On this date in 1911, the diary of Juliet Thompson records that 'Abdu'l-Bahá "did not attend the Universal Races' Congress. They had asked Him to speak on philosophy and to make no reference to religion, so He sent a representative, Tamaddunu'l-Mulk."

13 August 4. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi stated that "A marriage between two souls...inspiration to other Bahá'ís, as well as to non-believers." In 1957 he warned a Bahá'í couple that "if as registered believers you are married in a Christian ceremony, you will lose your voting rights."

14 August 7. On this date in 1928, the "Bahá'í" trademark (Trade-Mark 245,271) was registered with the United States Patent Office.

15 August 12. On this date in 1868, Bahá'u'lláh and his companions where exiled from Edirne to Acre due to a decision made by "Sultan Abdulaziz and his cabinet in reaction to Azali complaints and the importuning of the Iranian ambassador."

16 August 12. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi stated that in the marriage of a Bahá'í to a non-Bahá'í, "the consent of the parents of both parties is required."

17 August 12. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter to North American Bahá'ís later published as "Unconquerable Power" in "This Decisive Hour."

18 August 12. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... the supreme truth that with every fresh outbreak of hostility to the Faith, whether from within or without, a corresponding measure of outpouring grace, sustaining its defenders and confounding its adversaries, has been providentially ..."

19 August 12. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "As we have no clergy or priests there is no paid career open to Bahá'í teachers. This, however, does not mean that teachers going out to spread the Faith, and unable to support themselves, should not receive money..."

20 August 12. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that he wished Switzerland to have its own Temple site, which was to be situated near the capital city of Bern and have a clear view of the Bernese Alps, where he had spent so many months of his life walking and climbing."

21 August 12. On this date in 1975, the UHJ stated "If the use of light in any way at all suggests a personification of the Manifestation of God it should not be used, but if it can be done without in any way giving the impression that the Prophet is being...personified then there is no objection..."

22 August 12. On this date in 1977, the UHJ stated "that the command to cease work during the nine Holy Days is a matter for conscientious obedience by every individual believer...businesses and other undertakings entirely under Bahá'í control they must also close down during the Bahá'í Holy Days."

23 August 12. On this date in 2016, John W. Conkling died in Austin, Texas. He served on the staff of the Bahá'í World Center, as secretary of the U.S. National Teaching Committee and as a member of other national and regional committees. He helped establish two Bahá'í communities in ....

24 August 13. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi stated that "the Bahá'í Faith is above all a way of life. It is not a mere philosophical or social doctrine...to live the Teachings of the Cause should be the paramount concern of every true believer."

25 August 13. On this date in 1974, the UHJ wrote "By the sacred verse: "Begging is forbidden, and it is also prohibited to dispense alms to a beggar" is meant that mendicancy is forbidden and that giving charity to people who take up begging as their profession is also prohibited."

26 August 13. On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice published a memorandum titled "Quotations on Science and Religion."

27 August 13. On this date in 2005, John Hatcher gave a talk titled "Unveiling the Huri of Love" addressing "the issues that science and religion must resolve to become reconciled in their mutually exclusive descriptions of reality."

28 August 13. On this date in 2006, Peter Khan gave a talk titled "Education, Scholarship, and Global Civilization."

29 August 13. On this date in 2011, the New York Times featured an article about Ehsan Yarshater, the former Bahá'í scholar who was Hagop Kevorkian Professor Emeritus of Iranian Studies at Columbia University. The article also mentions Roy Mottahedeh, professor at Harvard University ...

30 August 13. On this date in 2013, Deborah Clark Vance gave a talk titled "Rethinking Women's Nature."

31 August 13. On this date in 2013, Hushmand Fatheazam died in Vancouver, British Columbia. He served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India from 1955 to 1963 when he was elected to the Universal House of Justice where he served until retiring in 2003.

32 August 14. On this date in 1914, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed a tablet to Louise R. Spencer Waite, who was also known as the Handmaiden of God and named Shahnaz.

33 August 14. On this date in 1938, Darrell "Dash" Crofts was born. Half of the duo Seals and Crofts, Dash Crofts has long been a member and public advocate of the Bahá'í Faith.

34 August 14. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís stating he "was shocked and indignant to hear of the conduct of certain of the Persian Bahá'í students in Germany which had been so criminal as to lead to their imprisonment."

35 August 14. On this date in 1968, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to "Bahá'í Friends" addressing the "Progress of the Nine Year Plan in the United States."

36 August 14. On this date in 1995, Suhayl ʻAlá'í died. An early pioneer to Samoa, he served on LSAs in Samoa, the U.S. and Australia, on the first Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific, the NSA of Samoa, as a Counsellor for Australasia, and as the liaison between Malietoa and the UHJ.

37 August 15. On this date in 1852, two years after the execution of the Báb in the midst of the Bábí uprisings, a group of Bábís attempted to assassinate Naser al-Din Shah Qajar. It was after the assassination attempt that Bahá'u'lláh and the other Bábí leadership were exiled to Baghdad.

38 August 15. On this date in 2002, "The Oak Ridger" carried a story written by David Sperry, "a publicist for area Bahá'ís," about an event on "July 9 at "Heart of the Hills" in Sevier County to commemorate the execution of the Báb." No mention is made about the Bábi uprisings.

39 Baha'i History - August 15. On this date in 1864, Díyá'u'lláh, the second son of Bahá'u'lláh through his second wife Fatimih, was born. Initially buried next to his father, Díyá'u'lláh's remains were disinterred in 1965 in a process the UHJ described as a "purification... from past contamination.

40 August 16. On this date in 1852, Bahá'u'lláh was arrested and imprisoned. Years later, when he publicly revealed his mission, Bahá'u'lláh would claim that during this incarceration he was visited by the "Maid of Heaven" who told him his mission as the "Manifestation of God."

41 August 16. On this date in 1912, the Portland Oregon Telegram stated "In Portland there are between 200 and 300 followers of Baha'ism."

42 August 16. On this date in 1942, a memorial was held for Abdu'l-Jalil Bey Sa'd in Wilmette, Illinois. He was a prominent member of the Egyptian Baha'i community in its early days, a Hand of the Cause of God, and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and the Sudan.

43 August 16. On this date in 1949, an individual whose visit to a Bahá'í Temple had elicited an "emotional reaction produced by disappointment" wrote Shoghi Effendi.

44 August 17. On this date in 1855, Percy Woodcock, an early Canadian Bahá'í who served on the Bahá'í Temple Unity (the precursor to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of United States and Canada), was born in Athens, Ontario.

45 August 17. On this date in 1941, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to two believers stated that the "doctrines of the church today are no longer needed--the Father Himself has come, and thus fulfilled the mission of Christ the Son."

46 August 17. On this date in 1969, during her tour of Africa, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum was interviewed on a Kenyan television program called “Today’s Guests” and spoke for seven minutes.

47 August 17. On this date in 1993, an individual wrote the UHJ "about the Bahá'í view towards homosexuality...as she is herself in love with another Bahá'í woman, and is perplexed about how to reconcile what seem to her to be natural desires with the laws and principles of the Faith."

48 August 18. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "it is obvious that Joseph Smith is not a Manifestation of God." The Bahá’í notion of progressive revelation exlcudes many key figures who have generated significant religious movements, whether in the distant past like Confucius or ...

49 August 18. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi stated "The friends are sometimes surprisingly naive and superficial in their approach to the subject of Covenant-breakers. They do not seem to understand that the descendants of Azal, with their mother's milk, drank hatred of Bahá'u'lláh."

50 August 18. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Attacks by missionaries, and others, such as that by Elder, should most certainly be vigorously defended publicly by your Assembly and Local Assemblies as well."

51 August 18. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter titled "This Hour, Crowded With Destiny," later published in the book "Citadel of Faith" describing Latin America as "so impoverished spiritually, so paralyzed with fear, so confused in thought, so abased in their moral standard."

52 August 18. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice reminded an NSA "participation in anti-apartheid demonstrations and protest activities could be construed as involvement in politics, and therefore should be avoided."

53 August 18. On this date in 2007, an article was written about "a Unitarian Universalist minister" who expressed "his feelings of frustration and offense" after having "been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá’í House of Worship."

54 August 19. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi stated "no personal presentation of the Bab, Bahá'u'lláh or the Master, only Their words can be used, but no figure must represent Them; great dignity must be the keynote."

55 August 19. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "To the Friends gathered at the Bahá’í International Conference at Lagos."

56 August 19. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote "While it is customary for the Tablets of Visitation to be recited at the conclusion of the Holy Day programs held at the Bahá'í World Centre, as well as in countries of the Middle East, this practice is not binding upon Bahá'í communities elsewhere."

57 August 20. On this date in 1909, Hand of the Cause of God and Custodian Paul Haney was born.

58 August 20. On this date in 1915, the Edward Getsinger filed for divorce from his wife Lua Getsinger, "on the ground of adultery with the co-respondents, Clifford H. Stearns and Ameen U Fareed."

59 August 20. On this date in 1930, Jean-Baptiste Louis Bourgeois died. He was a Canadian architect and designer of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois.

60 August 20. On this date in 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "The Guardian's infallibility covers interpretation of the revealed word and its application" and that "He is assured the guidance of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab."

61 August 21. On this date in 1868, as part of the exile from Edirne to Acre, "Baha'u'llah and His companions were taken on board an Austrian-Lloyd steamer bound for the Holy Land. The ship touched first at Modelli and Smyrna. At Alexandria, Baha'u'llah was transferred to another ship which ...."

62 August 21. On this date in 1912, an entry in Mahmud's Diary recounts an encounter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with "a young girl" ..."'I am a good Jewess.' The Master then said: 'A good Jew can also become a Bahá'í. The truth of the religion of Moses and of Bahá'u'lláh is one.'"

63 August 21. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of the U.S. and Canada "We read in The Times that Queen Marie of Rumania is coming to America. She seems to have obtained a great interest in the Cause. So we must be on our guard lest we do an act which may prejudice her and ...."

64 August 22. On this date in 1912, the Pittsburg Pennsylvania Post featured a review of Charles Mason Remey's book titled "The Bahá'í Movement."

65 August 22. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "It is not for individual believers to limit the sphere of the Guardian's authority, or to judge when they have to obey the Guardian and when they are free to reject his judgement. Such an attitude would evidently lead to confusion and to schism."

66 August 22. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote "In these days Bahá'ís can expect the flame of fanaticism to be kindled among the enemies of the Faith in Muslim countries. In meeting attacks the friends should learn to combine the spirit of steadfastness and courage with love and wisdom."

67 August 22. On this date in 2005, the NSA of the U.S. wrote "We hope that Kalimat Press is exercising appropriate care in the nature of the material it propagates and is mindful of the need, especially during this critical period in the Faith's development, of safeguarding the high station and ..."

68 August 23. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi sent a warning to American Bahá'ís about Joseph Perdu's travels to Hawaii and the United States mainland.

69 August 23. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram concerning the Bahá'ís in Iran, a document referred to in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's "The Priceless Pearl" noting "This was the first time in its history that an attacked Faith was able to fight back with weapons."

70 August 23. On this date in 1982, the UHJ wrote "that a homosexual relationship subverts the purpose of human life and that determined effort to overcome the wayward tendencies which promote this practice which,...so abhorrent; the Creator...will help you both to return to a path that leads to true

71 August 24. On this date in 1912, an article in The Montreal Daily Star announced that "'Abdu'l-Bahá, one of the supreme religious figures of the Orient, and known the world over as the head of the Bahá'í movement, with over three million followers in his native Persia alone, will arrive ..."

72 August 24. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Invite valiant co-sharers in Holy Enterprise join me in prayers" for the completion of the Shrine of the Bab given "Sudden unexpected worsening of international situation, necessity to effect economy..."

73 August 24. On this date in 1983, Sylvia Ioas died. She had served on the International Bahá'í Council, both as an appointed and elected member. She was the wife of Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas, who accompanied Shoghi Effendi and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum for their ...

74 August 24. On this date in 2007, Eunice L. Braun, a Bahá'í author who served as the head of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, as an editor for Bahá'í News, and as an Auxiliary Board member, died in Glenview, Illinois.

75 August 24. On this date in 2008, Paul Lample, member of the Universal House of Justice, gave a talk at the Nashville, Tennessee, Bahá'í Center about "the great spiritual enterprise" the worldwide Baha'i community has embarked on.

76 August 25. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The whole purpose of Bahá'u'lláh is that we should become a new kind of people, people who are upright, kind, intelligent, truthful, and honest and who live according to His great laws laid down for this new epoch in man's development."

77 August 25. On this date in 1959, Pritam Singh, believed to be the first member of the Sikh community in India to accept the Bahá'í Faith, died.

78 August 25. On this date in 1963, the UHJ wrote all NSAs "the sad fate which has overtaken the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád, the first Temple raised to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh. Due to its unsafe condition, resulting from earthquakes, the building has been entirely demolished and the site cleared

79 August 26. On this date in 1954, Horace Holley, a Hand of the Cause of God, gave a public address titled "Challenge to Chaos: The Mission of the Bahá'í Faith" delivered at the Bahá'í Temple Foundation Hall which he started by asking "Unity of God"? Who is God? What is God? Where is God?"

80 August 26. On this date in 1965, the UHJ wrote "the date of the beginning of the year of patience normally commences when one of the parties notifies the Assembly that they have separated with the intention of divorce. However, the Assembly may establish the beginning of the year of patience ...."

81 August 27. On this date in 1852, subsequent to a failed assassination attempt by some Bábís of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, Fatimah Baraghani, also known as Qurrat al-Ayn, was executed. An influential Bábí theologian, she would shun most of her family because they did not adopt her new religion.

82 August 27. On this date in 1926, Queen Marie of Romania "responded to this first communication from the Guardian and wrote to him what he described as a 'deeply touching letter.'"

83 August 27. On this date in 1943, Anna Rudd, wife of the first Swedish Bahá'í pioneer August Rudd, passed away.

84 August 27. On this date in 1998, the UHJ wrote "In the light of the Teachings which are well known to you, and given the repeated statements of the House of Justice on this subject, it is not correct to insist that the House of Justice has an interpretative function."

85 August 28. On this date in 1934, the Most Great Name symbol was registered as a trademark (Trade-Mark 316,444). Similarly, the "Bahá'í" trademark (Trade-Mark 245,271) was registered with the Patent Office on August 7, 1928. These trademarks have not prevented the use of the term "Bahá'í" by ...

86 August 28. On this date in 1965, the UHJ wrote "Learning of the victories achieved by the valiant souls who have arisen to serve Bahá'u'lláh can inspire others and can create a sense of world perspective which raises one's sights above his own petty pre-occupations..."

87 August 28. On this date in 1969, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum began to visit "the Bahá'í communities on the coast between Mombasa and Malindi which are mainly composed of members of the famous Giriama tribe."

88 August 28. On this date in 2012, an email asked the UHJ about statements by Hartmut Grossmann that "The lesser peace will be established by 2021 when world leaders recognize that only the Baha'is offer a world system established all over the world which is service-minded and concerned for all...."

89 August 29. On this date in 1912, the Montreal Gazzette introduced "'Abdu'l-Bahá, who is 68 years old, is the centre of the Bahá'í movement, with a following in Persia, his native country, of three million people, while many thousands of others are to be found in India, Egypt and Turkey."

90 August 29. On this date in 1983, the government of Iran banned the Bahá'í Administrative Order, preventing formation of LSAs and the participation of individual Bahá'ís in administrative activities.

91 August 30. On this date in 1851, Bahá'u'lláh visited Karbala, where Muhammad's grandson Husayn is buried. "Imam Husayn has, as attested by the Iqan, been endowed with special grace and

power among the Imams, hence the mystical reference to Bahá'u'lláh as the return of Imam Husayn, meaning ..."

92 August 30. On this date in 1911, Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, also known as Vakílu'd-Dawlih ("Agent of the State") the chief financier of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ashgabat and an Afnán, died in Haifa. He was the first to be buried in the Haifa Bahá'í cemetery.

93 August 30. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The friends...should not feel bewildered, for they have the assurance of Bahá'u'lláh that whatever the nature and character of the forces of opposition facing His Cause, its eventual triumph is indubitably certain."

94 August 31. On this date in 1868, the ship carrying Baha'u'llah and his companions arrived in Haifa.

95 August 31. On this date in 1987, the UHJ announced plans for development of buildings on the Arc and Terraces in Haifa asking for "a reserve of fifty million dollars" and "an income of between twenty and twenty-five million dollars for the Bahá'í International Fund for each of the next ten years.

96 August 31. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The Faith advances, not at a uniform rate of growth, but in vast surges, precipitated by the alternation of crisis and victory."

August 1. On this date in 1851, Mullá Muḥammad-ʻAliy-i-Zanjání, the leader of the Bábí revolt in Zanjan, was killed.

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August 1. On this date in 1851, Mullá Muḥammad-ʻAliy-i-Zanjání, the leader of the Bábí revolt in Zanjan, was killed.

On March 20, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated.

Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings. Under instructions from the Báb, on July 21, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis. They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at thebattle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849, but siege itself would last until May 10, 1849.

The Báb was later executed on July 9, 1850. Bábi uprisings would continue elsewhere in Iran, notably Neyriz and Zanjan.

Comments

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August 1. On this date in 1967, the UHJ wrote an individual believer "Concerning the question of display of the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh, the Guardian's instructions were that this should be done only with the utmost reverence, and then only on special occasions. While the Guardian did not ..."

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August 1. On this date in 1967, the Universal House of Justice wrote an individual believer "Concerning the question of display of the photograph of Bahá'u'lláh, the Guardian's instructions were that this should be done only with the utmost reverence, and then only on special occasions. While the Guardian did not require believers to send such photographs to the Holy Land, he said that it was better to do so. However, if you have made any photographic copies or negatives of the photograph or the portrait, these should be forwarded to the Holy Land in a safe way."

Comments

August 1. On this date in 1996, "Deepen" magazine published an article titled "Flow of Divine Authority" by Brent Poirier addressing the question "What is the scriptural authority for the Universal House of Justice to function without the presence of the Guardian of the Cause?"

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August 1. On this date in 1996, *Deepen* magazine published an article titled "Flow of Divine Authority" by Brent Poirier addressing the question "What is the scriptural authority for the Universal House of Justice to function without the presence of the Guardian of the Cause?"

The article notes in particular...

"Divorced from the Institution of the Guardianship"

Any discussion of the authority for the Universal House of Justice to function infallibly without the presence of the Guardian must address the following passage from Shoghi Effendi's *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh:*

"Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. "In all the Divine Dispensations," He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, "the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright." Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn." ["Quotation D"]

"Severed from the no less essential institution of the Universal House of Justice this same System of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be paralyzed in its action and would be powerless to fill in those gaps which the Author of the Kitab-i-Aqdas has deliberately left in the body of His legislative and administrative ordinances."45 ["Quotation E"] Some of the friends have experienced particular difficulty in accepting the ability of the Universal House of Justice to function infallibly without the presence of the Guardian, because they believe that those words from the Guardian in Quotation D were a direct warning about that very circumstance. A reader of this passage might naturally ask whether Shoghi Effendi when he wrote those words in 1934, confident that there would be future Guardians,46 was elaborating the horrible consequence s to the Cause of God if the line of Guardians were to end. From the Guardian's phrase "Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship," should we understand his intention to have been a description of the mutilation of the Cause that would occur if the Universal House of Justice were to function without a living Guardian?

The House of Justice has provided the key to understanding this subject when it elucidates "the principle of inseparability," and gives several examples of the application of that principle to the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.47

In order to understand the meaning of "divorced from the institution of the Guardianship" in Quotation D, we have the benefit of other passages in Shoghi Effendi's writings where he uses similar, sometimes identical language to illustrate this principle. We have seen in Quotation A, how Shoghi Effendi warned that to "divorce" or "dissociate" the institutions established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá from the underlying laws of Bahá'u'lláh would "amount to a repudiation of one of the most sacred and basic truths of the Faith."48 In yet another passage, he used strikingly similar language to elaborate the scriptural authority for the functioning of the Bahá'í institutions:

"It should be remembered by every follower of the Cause that the system of Bahá'í administration is not an innovation imposed arbitrarily upon the Bahá'ís of the world since the Master's passing, but derives its authority from the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is specifically prescribed in unnumbered Tablets, and rests in some of its essential features upon the explicit provisions of the Kitab-i-Aqdas. It thus unifies and correlates the principles separately laid down by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and is indissolubly bound with the essential verities of the Faith. To dissociate the administrative principles of the Cause from the purely spiritual and humanitarian teachings would be tantamount to a mutilation of the body of the Cause, a separation that can only result in the disintegration of its component parts, and the extinction of the Faith itself."49 [Quotation F]

Please note that the Guardian described such a "dissociation" as a "mutilation of the Cause." This is another illustration of what the Universal House of Justice terms "the principle of inseparability." A careful reading of Quotation F will show that the Guardian's purpose is to elaborate the unity of the components of the Bahá'í Faith, not to issue a warning about possible future events. The "mutilation" would be to knowingly misunderstand this important verity of the Faith.

The Guardian again illustrates the principle of inseparability when he explains that the distinct periods of Bahá'í history must be understood as one whole; to see them in isolation from one another and thereby dissociate them from one another, would be to "mutilate" the Cause and pervert the truth:

"*The century under our review [1844-1944] may therefore be considered as falling into four distinct periods, of unequal duration, each of specific import and of tremendous and indeed unappraisable significance. These four periods are closely interrelated, and constitute successive acts of one, indivisible, stupendous and sublime drama, whose mystery no intellect can fathom, whose climax no eye can even dimly perceive, whose conclusion no mind*

can adequately foreshadow. Each of these acts revolves around its own theme, boasts of its own heroes, registers its own tragedies, records its own triumphs, and contributes its own share to the execution of one common, immutable Purpose. To isolate any one of them from the others, to dissociate the later manifestations of one universal, all-embracing Revelation from the pristine purpose that animated it in its earliest days, would be tantamount to a mutilation of the structure on which it rests, and to a lamentable perversion of its truth and of its history . . . .

These four periods are to be regarded not only as the component, the inseparable parts of one stupendous whole, but as progressive stages in a single evolutionary process, vast, steady and irresistible. 50

In yet another instance, the Guardian uses the same terminology to apply the principle of inseparability to the Bahá'í institutions of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar and its Dependencies.51 I suggest that it is clear from all of these instances that it is the design of Bahá'u'lláh that the Guardian is speaking of.

In all of these cases, whether he uses the term "divorced," "dissociated," or "isolated," the purpose of Shoghi Effendi is to communicate to his reader the inseparability of the components of the Faith. This is his way of imparting a spiritual truth to us — the "principle of inseparability" in its various applications. In all of these instances, the Guardian is using this

language to communicate to us something our minds have never previously grasped: The wonder of this "vast and unique" Order, of this "colossal," this "mighty Administrative structure."52 He is not warning us of the consequences of the loss of any Bahá'í institution, nor speaking of such a loss as a "mutilation" of the Cause of God. Rather, through use of this powerful language he infuses our understanding with his vision of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

The article concludes...

Conclusion

Shoghi Effendi referred to the Bahá'ís as the "stewards" of the Faith,58 and designated the Hands of the Cause of God as its "Chief Stewards."59 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave the Hands the specific protective function of expelling Covenant breakers.60 They were not endowed with infallibility; their capacity to lead the Bahá'í Faith was explicit in only one word: "Chief." The generality of the Bahá'í community was, as yet, unaware of the provisions in the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* for the transmission of authority to the Hands of the Cause and would not learn of this verse for over a decade.61

Despite these limitations on their office, despite the fact that they possessed, in the mind of the generality of the friends, only one word of authority, it is worth reflecting on the power of that one word to keep the Cause of God united until the Universal House of Justice was brought into being. One of the first acts of the Universal House of Justice was to express its heartfelt love and gratitude to the Hands.62

In contrast, the authority of the Universal House of Justice to function infallibly with only its elected members is explicitly provided in a number of passages in the Writings of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. One can only wonder at the power of such emphatic language, the power of the Covenants of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to keep the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh united behind **"[T]he divine and Universal House of Justice...that central pivot of the people of Bahá...."**63.

Shoghi Effendi wrote, "Only those who come after us will be in a position to realize the value of the surprisingly strong emphasis that has been placed on the institution of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship."64 Among the "surprisingly emphatic language"65 to which he refers, are surely these words from the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

"The sacred and youthful branch, the guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal House of Justice, to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abha Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God. Whoso obeyeth him not, neither obeyeth them, hath not obeyed God; whoso rebelleth against him and against them hath rebelled against God; whoso opposeth him hath opposed God; whoso contendeth with them hath contended with God; whoso disputeth with him hath disputed with God; whoso denieth him hath denied God; whoso disbelieveth in him hath disbelieved in God; whoso deviateth, separateth himself and turneth aside from him hath in truth deviated, separated himself and turned aside from God. May the wrath, the fierce indignation, the vengeance of God rest upon him!"66

We may derive conviction from these words with which 'Abdu'l-Bahá closes His Last Will and Testament, words which will ring down through the centuries:

"All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error. The Glory of Glories rest upon you!"67

Comments

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Comments

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Born in 1927 to a Jewish family in Brooklyn, New York, Fred Schechter served in the Navy then attended Syracuse University. A comparative religion course provided his first serious look at the Bahá'í Faith, and he became a believer in spring 1949. He soon focused his studies on library science and administration after being advised such a degree could help him find work in many parts of the world. By the time he earned a master's degree in 1952 he was serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly and a regional teaching committee, and exploring the possibility of international pioneering.

He first went to Kenya to help fulfill the Two Year Plan assigned to the British Bahá'í community. A few months later Shoghi Effendi asked the Bahá'ís to disperse to meet goals of the Ten Year Crusade of 1953–1963, so in October 1953 Fred arrived in French Somaliland. He was one of three honored by Shoghi Effendi as Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for their roles in opening that territory to the Faith. Lack of employment kept that stay brief, and his job

search took him to Ethiopia before he landed in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1954. A year later Fred made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he conversed with the Guardian.

Continuing to respond to the needs of the Bahá'í community's development, in 1957 he accepted an invitation by William Sears, then an Auxiliary Board member and later a Hand of the Cause, to move to his family's farm near Johannesburg. Based there, he helped to teach the Faith and to prepare for election of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa, established only a year earlier.

Soon the goals of the Crusade were met in Africa. But the needs were still acute in South America, so Fred, along with Bill Sears Jr., traveled to Uruguay. During a campaign to strengthen the Bahá'í community there, Fred met his life partner, fellow Bahá'í Julia Bulling, and they married in her home country of Chile in 1960. Bill Sears Jr. married Julia's sister Mariel. Months passed before Fred and Julia settled down; to meet Bahá'í community needs they traveled to the Dominican Republic and then to Ecuador, where their first son was born. It emerged that Uruguay was where they were needed most, so they returned to live there through 1965, welcoming a second son. Fred and Julia were members of Uruguay's National Spiritual Assembly, with Fred serving as secretary.

Economic conditions caused them to move to the United States, and their daughter was born there. Living for many years in La Mesa, California, Fred continued to teach and support the Faith energetically, serving the region as a member of a teaching committee and later as an Auxiliary Board member. He was elected several times as a delegate to the Bahá'í National Convention. In 1980 he began 13 years' service as a member of the Continental Board of Counselors for the Americas. He retired in 1990 from the administration of the San Diego Public Library System. In 1993 he was called to the Bahá'í World Center to serve as a Counselor member of the International Teaching Center, returning to California in 1998.

For years Fred offered courses at Bosch and Louhelen Bahá'í Schools, the Southern California summer school and other gatherings, speaking on Bahá'í history, the Guardian and the Hands of the Cause, the worldwide Plans, and other topics.

Fred's wife, Julia Bulling Schechter, preceded him in death. His survivors include their three children, Charles, Jim and Amy; and eight grandchildren.

Comments

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1122. Assistant Functions Individually, Does Not Function in Relation to National Assembly, Should Foster Warm Relationship Between Local Assembly and Board Member

"In the relationship between assistants and the National Spiritual Assembly no problems should arise, because the functions are entirely separate. An assistant is appointed by an Auxiliary Board member to help him in a specified area of the territory and he functions as an assistant only in relation to that area. Assistants, like Auxiliary Board members, function individually, not as a consultative body. Assistants who are members of a National Assembly or a national committee do not function as assistants in relation to that body, and they have the same duty to observe the confidentiality of its consultations, and of matters considered by the Assembly to be confidential, as does any other member. An assistant can, of course, be a member of a Local Spiritual Assembly, but his task here as an Assistant is to help the Spiritual Assembly to function harmoniously and efficiently in the discharge of its duties and this will hardly succeed if he gives the Assembly the feeling that he is reporting privately everything it does to the Auxiliary Board member. He should, on the

contrary, do all he can to foster an atmosphere of warm and loving collaboration between the Local Assembly and the Board member."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Virgin Islands, August 2, 1982)

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian, appointed members to the International Bahá'í Council, naming Mason Remey as the Council's President and describing it as an embryonic international House of Justice.

When Shoghi Effendi passed away in 1957 without having appointed a successor Guardian, as confirmed by a "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God", the Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council, into the Universal House of Justice.

In 1961 the International Bahá'í Council was changed to an elected body, with members of all National Spiritual Assemblies voting.

In 1963, the first Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members are elected every five years by members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world. In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. New members are currently generally elected from the appointed institutions of the Bahá'í administration, particularly the International Teaching Centre. In fact, all of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In council democracies, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

With the eventual passing of the individual Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi and without a Guardian to appoint additional Hands, the Universal House of Justice saw the need for developing an institution for the purpose of performing the Hands' function of protection and propagation of the Faith.

In 1968 the Continental Board of Counselors was formed. The Counselors appoint Auxiliaries collectively referred to as Auxiliary Boards in smaller regional areas, who in turn appoint their own Assistants to work in localities.

Auxiliary Board Members for Protection are charged with watching over the security of the Bahá'í Faith, and Auxiliary Board Members for Propagation are responsible for working with the grassroots on the global Plans established by the Universal House of Justice. Originally, members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed by and served under the Hands of the Cause of God who directed their efforts worldwide. The first members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed in 1954, and they were divided into five distinct geographical regions

In 1973 the administrative branch called the Institution of the Counselors was formed. Also in 1973, the International Teaching Centre was first formed by the Universal House of Justice, and originally consisted of the 17 Hands of the Cause still living at that time, plus three Counsellor members. The number of Counsellor members was raised to four in 1979, to seven in 1983, and finally to the current nine in 1988. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre are appointed by the Universal House of Justice to five-year terms that begin shortly after the International Convention and election of the Universal House of Justice.

Comments

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Amoz Gibson was born in Washington, D.C., on August 3, 1918, and received a bachelors degree in education from Miner Teachers College (now the University of the District of Columbia) in 1940 and a master of arts in geography from Mexico City College (now University of the Americas) in 1951. He was inducted into the US Army in 1944 and served in Europe and the Pacific. He returned to Washington in 1946 and continued his work in the educational field as a teacher. In the mid-1950s he pioneered to the Navajo Indian Reservation, where he taught for four years. In 1959 he was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for protection, and in 1960 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. In 1963 he was elected to the first Universal House of Justice.

His career is typical for individuals in the Bahá'í hierarchy, whether in an elected office or in an appointed offce from which the higher elected officials invariably come from.

At all levels, including the LSAs, Bahá'í leaders are generally as authoritarian, if not more, than clergy from other religious faiths, which as Dale Husband points out, is one of the Four Ways to Create a Religion of Hypocrites:

State that religion no longer needs clergy……and replace them with leaders that are as authoritarian as the clergy ever was.

Claim that men and women should be equal……but then deny women membership in the all-powerful leadership council of the religion.

Condemn as heretics those who believe in your religion but dare to challenge the claims of your religion's current leadership, while at the same time claiming to welcome as friends the followers of other religions.

Claim there is harmony between science and religion, but also claim that anything your leaders say is absolutely true, even if on topics science is expected to address.

Any one of these makes a religion not worth following, but what do you do if you find a religion that has all four such contradictions

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3 August 1935

He wishes me particularly to convey to you his most genuine appreciation of your services in connection with the publication of "La Nova Tago" which he hopes will, through your efforts and those of the Esperanto-speaking Bahá'ís both in Germany and abroad, develop gradually into a leading Esperanto review, and thus become an effective medium for the spread of Teachings in Esperantist circles throughout the world. It is in view of the far-reaching possibilities which this publication can have as a teaching organ, that he has urged the German N.S.A. to resume its publication when, a few months ago, they had almost decided to discontinue printing it.

With regard to your request for a special article from the Guardian which you wish to have published in the forthcoming issue of your magazine. He would suggest that you should translate his general letter addressed to the friends a few years ago, entitled "The Goal of a New World Order", as this, he feels, is a very suitable material for publication in that review, and is by far better than anything he can write at present.

As to your suggestion regarding a more widespread use of the Esperanto among the Bahá'ís as a medium of correspondence. Shoghi Effendi, as you know, has been invariably encouraging the believers, both in the East and in the West, to make an intensive study of that language, and to consider it as an important medium for the spread of the Cause in international circles. He has been specially urging the friends to have the Cause well represented in all Esperanto Congresses and associations, and by this means cultivate greater friendship and cooperation between them and the Esperantists.

But in this connection, he feels, he must make it clear that although the Cause views with much sympathy and appreciation the activities which the Esperantists are increasingly initiating for the spread of their language, yet it considers that the adoption of the Esperanto by the entire world is by no means an inevitable fact. Neither Bahá'u'lláh, nor even `Abdu'l-Bahá, ever stated that Esperanto will be the international auxiliary language. The Master simply expressed the hope that it may, provided certain conditions were fulfilled, develop into such a medium.

On April 25, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to Esperantists in Washington, D.C., stating "We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech."

Today the greatest need of the world of humanity is discontinuance of the existing misunderstandings among nations. This can be accomplished through the unity of language. Unless the unity of languages is realized, the Most Great Peace and the oneness of the human world cannot be effectively organized and established because the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of human hearts. The heart is like a box, and language is the key. Only by using the key can we open the box and observe the gems it contains. Therefore, the question of an auxiliary international tongue has the utmost importance. Through this means international education and training become possible; the evidence and history of the past can be acquired. The spread of the known facts of the

human world depends upon language. The explanation of divine teachings can only be through this medium. As long as diversity of tongues and lack of comprehension of other languages continue, these glorious aims cannot be realized. Therefore, the very first service to the world of man is to establish this auxiliary international means of communication. It will become the cause of the tranquillity of the human commonwealth. Through it sciences and arts will be spread among the nations, and it will prove to be the means of the progress and development of all races. **We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech.**

One year later, on February 12, 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' addressed the Paris Esperanto Society, as reported in the "Star of the West" magazine..,

Praise be to God, that Dr Zamenhof has created the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of universal adoption. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for his noble effort, for in this matter he has served his fellowmen well. He has constructed a language which will bestow divine benefits on all peoples. With untiring efforts and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees it gives promise of universal acceptation. Therefore **everyone of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that the business of the future conferences and congresses will be carried on in Esperanto. In the future two languages will be taught in the schools, one the native tongue, the other the international auxiliary language.** Consider today how difficult is human communication. One may study 50 languages and yet travel through a country and still be at a loss. I, myself, know several of the Oriental languages, but know no Western tongue. Had this universal language pervaded the globe, I should have studied it and you would have been directly informed of my thoughts and I of yours and a special friendship would have been established between us.

Please send some teachers to Persia, if you can, so that they may teach Esperanto to the young people. I have written asking some of them to come here to study it.

I hope that it will be promulgated very rapidly - then the world of humanity will find eternal peace; all the nations will associate with one another like mothers and sisters,

fathers and brothers, and each individual member of the body politic will be fully informed of the thoughts of all

This talk was also covered in J.E. Esselmont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the chapter entitled *Universal Language*:

At an Esperanto banquet given in Paris in February 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:—

Today one of the chief causes of the differences in Europe is the diversity of languages. We say this man is a German, the other is an Italian, then we meet an Englishman and then again a Frenchman. Although they belong to the same race, yet language is the greatest barrier between them. Were a universal auxiliary language in operation they would all be considered as one.

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh wrote about this international language more than forty years ago. He says that as long as an international language is not adopted, complete union between the various sections of the world will be unrealized, for we observe that misunderstandings keep people from mutual association, and these misunderstandings will not be dispelled except through an international auxiliary language.

Generally speaking, the whole people of the Orient are not fully informed of events in the West, neither can the Westerners put themselves in sympathetic touch with the Easterners; their thoughts are enclosed in a casket—the international language will be the master key to open it. Were we in possession of a universal language, the Western books could easily be translated into that language, and the Eastern peoples be informed of their contents. In the same way the books of the East could be translated into that language for the benefit of the people in the West. The greatest means of progress towards the union of East and West will be a common language. It will make the whole world one home and become the strongest impulse for human advancement. It will upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity. It will make the earth one universal commonwealth. It will be the cause of love between the children of men. It will cause good fellowship between the various races.

Now, praise be to God that Dr. Zamenhof has invented the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of becoming the international means of communication. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for this noble effort; for in this way he has served his fellowmen well. With untiring effort and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees Esperanto will become universal. Therefore every one of us must study this language and spread it as far as possible so that day by day it may receive a broader recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world, and

become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that Esperanto will be adopted as the language of all the future international conferences and congresses, so that all people need acquire only two languages—one their own tongue and the other the international language. Then perfect union will be established between all the people of the world. Consider how difficult it is today to communicate with various nations. If one studies fifty languages one may yet travel through a country and not know the language. Therefore I hope that you will make the utmost effort, so that this language of Esperanto may be widely spread.

In the past, Bahá'ís were more active in learning and encouraging the learning of Esperanto, and the links between Esperanto and the Bahá'í Faith are numerous. Ehsan Yarshater, the ex-Bahá'í founder and editor of Encyclopedia Iranica, notes how as a child in Iran he learned and taught Esperanto and that when his mother was visiting Haifa he wrote her a letter in Persian as well as Esperanto. L.L. Zamenhof's daughter, Lidia Zamenhof was a convert to the Bahá'í Faith. At the request of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Agnes Baldwin Alexander became an early advocate of Esperanto and used it to spread the Bahá'í teachings at meetings and conferences in Japan.

Due to the failure of Esperanto to gain significant traction, however, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statements have been backtracked, such that Shoghi Effendi said

Regarding the subject of Esperanto; it should be made clear to the believers that **while the teaching of that language has been repeatedly encouraged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there is no reference either from Him or from Bahá'u'lláh that can make us believe that it will necessarily develop into the international auxiliary language of the future.** Bahá'u'lláh has specified in His Writings that such a language will either have to be chosen from one of the existing languages, or an entirely new one should be created to serve as a medium of exchange between the nations and peoples of the world. Pending this final choice, the Bahá'ís are advised to study Esperanto only in consideration of the fact that the learning of this language can considerably facilitate intercommunication between individuals, groups and Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world in the present stage of the evolution of the Faith.

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On January 29, 1904, Lidia Zamenhof, the daughter of Esperanto creator L.L. Zamnhof, was born. She converted to the Bahá'í Faith around 1925. In late 1937 she went to the United States to teach that religion as well as Esperanto. In December 1938, on the instructions of

Shoghi Effendi, she returned to Poland, where she continued to teach and translated many Bahá'í writings. The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.

The description of her life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in

the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.

Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:

EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.

His response was decisive:

APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]

Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:

REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.

She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced *fellahin*, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.

She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.

From the following section:

Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:

Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]

In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:

HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR.[183]

She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.

Comments

August 3. On this date in 1950, those attending a German and Austrian Bahá'í Youth Summer School wrote Shoghi Effendi, who responded that "only the remedy of the "Divine Physician" can solve the problems facing humanity and we work day and night to give the message of Bahá'u'lláh to the masses..."

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

August 3. On this date in 1950, those attending a German and Austrian Bahá'í Youth Summer School wrote Shoghi Effendi, who responded that "We know that only the remedy of the "Divine Physician" can solve the problems facing humanity and we work day and night to give the message of Bahá'u'lláh to the masses..."

2 October 1950

To those present at Youth Summer School, August 3, 1950, c/o National Bahá'í Youth Committee of the Bahá'ís of Germany and Austria Dear Bahá'í Friends:

The letter dated August 3, and signed by those attending the Youth Summer-School, was received by our beloved Guardian, as well as the photo of Burg Breuberg, and he was delighted to see so many youth had attended from Germany and different countries.

He urges you all to concentrate on teaching the Faith to the young people, who must be surely bewildered by the state of the present day world, and who are so in need of guidance and supranational goal towards which they can strive with heart and soul.

We know that only the remedy of the "Divine Physician" can solve the problems facing humanity and we work day and night to give the message of Bahá'u'lláh to the masses....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-workers:

I was deeply touched by your welcome message, and I wish to express my deepfelt appreciation of the sentiments you have expressed. I greatly value your labours, and I feel confident that the Beloved, whose Cause you serve so devotedly, will guide and sustain you in your high endeavours. Persevere and rest assured that the work you are achieving will bear rich fruit in the days to come.

Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

Comments

August 3. On this date in 1960, two cables sent by the Custodians listed some of the prominent believers in Mason Remey's claim to the Guardianship, calling them "Remey's henchmen" and declaring them Covenant-breakers as well as "anyone associating (with) these people."

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

August 3. On this date in 1960, two cables sent by the Custodians listed some of the prominent believers in Mason Remey's calling them "Remey's henchmen" and declaring them Covenant-breakers as well as "anyone associating (with) these people."

First cable...

To All National Spiritual Assemblies, c/o BAHAI WILMETTE

AUGUST 3, 1960

BELOVED GUARDIAN'S GLORIOUS EPISTLE GOD PASSES BY CLEARLY STATES HOLY CAUSE CONSTANTLY SUBJECT CRISES GIVING RISE GREATER VICTORIES STOP HISTORY DEFECTION DISTINGUISHED BELIEVERS FOLLOWING ASCENSION FORERUNNER FAITH SUPREME MANIFESTATION CENTRE COVENANT NOW REPEATED AFTER ASCENSION PRECIOUS SHOGHI Effendi THROUGH MASON REMEY'S DEFECTION HIS PREPOSTEROUS UTTERLY UNFOUNDED CLAIMS STOP PROTECTION BELIEVERS FROM ACTIVITIES MISGUIDED MISCHIEF MAKERS GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY REPENT NOW REQUIRES EXPULSION FAITH REMEY's HENCHMEN JOHN CARRE BERNARD Fillon, MONEER. DARAKHSHAN JOEL MARANGELLA JACQUES SOGHOMONIAN DONALD HARVEY JOHN BYERS IN FRANCE AND MARY WILKIN UNITED STATES STOP HENCEFORTH ANYONE ASSOCIATING THESE PEOPLE OR SUPPORTING REMEY CLAIM LIKEWISE CONSIDERED COVENANT BREAKER STOP CONFIDENT FAITHFUL DEVOTED BODY BELIEVERS MINDFUL INFINITE BOUNTIES

PRAISES SHOWERED BELOVED GUARDIAN WILL DEMONSTRATE THROUGH UNITED ACTION IMPREGNABLE SOLIDARITY ARISE ACHIEVE GLORIOUS GOALS GOD-INSPIRED CRUSADE STOP CABLE MESSAGE ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES.

HANDSFAITH

[CABLE]

Second cable...

AUGUST 3,1960

BELOVED GUARDIAN'S GLORIOUS EPISTLE GOD PASSES BY CLEARLY STATES HOLY CAUSE CONSTANTLY SUBJECT CRISES GIVING RISE GREATER VICTORIES STOP HISTORY DEFECTION DISTINGUISHED BELIEVERS FOLLOWING ASCENSION FORERUNNER FAITH SUPREME MANIFESTATION CENTRE COVENANT NOW REPEATED AFTER ASCENSION PRECIOUS SHOGHI Effendi THROUGH MASON REMEY'S DEFECTION HIS PREPOSTEROUS UTTERLY UNFOUNDED CLAIMS STOP PROTECTION BELIEVERS FROM ACTIVITIES MISGUIDED MISCHIEF MAKERS GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY REPENT NOW REQUIRES EXPULSION FAITH REMEY'S HENCHMEN JOHN CARRE BERNARD FILLON, MONEER DARAKHSHAN JOEL MARANGELLA JACQUES SOGHOMONIAN DONALD HARVEY JOHN BYERS IN FRANCE AND MARY WILKIN UNITED STATES STOP HENCEFORTH ANYONE ASSOCIATING THESE PEOPLE OR SUPPORTING REMEY CLAIM LIKEWISE CONSIDERED COVENANT BREAKER STOP CONFIDENT FAITHFUL DEVOTED BODY BELIEVERS MINDFUL INFINITE BOUNTIES PRAISES SHOWERED BELOVED GUARDIAN WILL DEMONSTRATE THROUGH UNITED ACTION IMPREGNABLE SOLIDARITY ARISE ACHIEVE GLORIOUS GOALS GODINSPIRED CRUSADE STOP CABLE MESSAGE ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES.

HANDSFAITH

Comments

August 3. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to Kalimat Press "on the subject of the manner in which Kalimat has promoted to Bahá'ís Juan Cole's book, 'Modernity and the Millennium.'"

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

August 3. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to Kalimat Press "on the subject of the manner in which Kalimat has promoted to Bahá'ís Juan Cole's book, *Modernity and the Millennium*." The letter addresses "the problem of attitude on your part that the National Assembly was asked to raise with you" and admonishes "The assumption of Bahá'í institutions is that the purpose motivating a group of believers to create a publishing house that enjoys privileged access to the Bahá'í community is in order to promote the advancement of the Bahá'í Cause. The House of Justice has always assumed — as is no doubt the case with Bahá'ís generally — that this was the desire that motivated you and your associates to create Kalimat Press. If some different conception of purpose underlies the Kalimat enterprise, then it is essential that you advise the United States National Spiritual Assembly of the facts of the situation, frankly, unequivocally, and without delay. The House of Justice calls on you to meditate profoundly on the questions raised in the foregoing, as these issues bear directly on the relationship that binds you to your Lord...The House of Justice expects that you have now understood clearly what is at stake and that you will resolve, unambiguously and at once, to abandon the course you have, alas, been pursuing."

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to Kalimat, 1999

Transmitted by email

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has reviewed the letter of 8 May 1999 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, signed by you on behalf of Kalimat Press and copied for the House of Justice, on the subject of the manner in which Kalimat has promoted to Bahá'ís Juan Cole's book, Modernity and the Millennium. We have been asked to write as follows.

A good deal of the work of Kalimat Press, which you have ably directed during the twenty or so years of the firm's existence, has constituted a significant contribution to the advancement of the Cause we all love and seek to serve. It is clear, too, that, beyond the administration of Kalimat's activities, this valued contribution owes a great deal to your own creativity and professional talents. These circumstances move the House of the Justice to share with you candidly the deep concern it feels regarding your relationship with the Bahá'í Faith.

As you are aware, such concern prompted earlier efforts, including those made by Counsellor ___ and __, *a member of the Auxiliary Board, in their interview with you and your wife, Dr. _, in May of 1996, to draw to your attention the serious dangers of the course you have long been following. At that time, you expressed to Mr.* __ your deep regret over actions on your part that were seen by the House of Justice to be clearly in conflict with the beliefs you profess as a follower of Bahá'u'lláh, as well as your firm assurance that your actions would not again give cause for such intervention.

It is impossible to reconcile professions of this kind with the arguments made by you in the 8 May letter. The inappropriateness of the promotional statements and of the approach taken in the letter serves as an illustration of the attitude and behavior on your part that have long been a source of difficulty. It is these personal elements that the House of Justice has asked us to address.

Clearly, no one would dispute the right of Dr. Cole to write and publish whatever work a publisher is prepared to handle. Nor has anyone questioned the right of a Bahá'í who is interested in such a book to purchase it. To suggest that the House of Justice is saying otherwise would be to seriously misconstrue the nature of its concern. **The book itself is incidental to the problem of attitude on your part that the National Assembly was asked to raise with you.** As a participant in various Internet discussion groups over the past five years, and particularly in the last year or two, you cannot but be aware from these exchanges that Dr. Cole has embarked on a deliberate assault against the Bahá'í Cause, in which he has not hesitated to attack its institutions, to misrepresent its fundamental teachings, and to abuse the trust of Bahá'ís who had been led to believe that they were

engaged with him in a detached and scholarly search for the truth. These same Internet exchanges exposed you, like other participants, to a flood of calumny and invective against a great many of your fellow believers, on the part of Dr. Cole, that is scarcely credible in rational discourse.

Had such a book as Modernity and the Millennium been written by a disinterested non-Bahá'í scholar, its misconception of the nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission and its other shortcomings would have represented no more than understandable weaknesses of an honest attempt to explore a religious phenomenon as yet little understood in the West. Indeed, in this context, such an attempt to make the Bahá'í Faith comprehensible to the Western academic mind, however inadequate it might appear to knowledgeable Bahá'í scholars, would surely have earned its author a measure of genuine Bahá'í appreciation for the writing and research skills deployed in devising it.

As you — like other participants in certain Internet discussion groups — are well aware, **however, the book's author is not a disinterested scholar. Rather, he is a deeply embittered individual who, as his book was in preparation, had just denounced in the most intemperate language an apparent twenty-year allegiance to Bahá'u'lláh, in the wake of a failed attempt on his part to impose his private ideological agenda on the Bahá'í community's study of Bahá'u'lláh's Message. Modernity and the Millennium represents an effort to provide the current stage of this long-running scheme with the underpinnings of scholarly rationalization.**

What is this rationalization? Although distorted by its evasion of Bahá'í Texts that contradict its main assertions, and blurred by reliance on speculations peculiar to its author's purpose, the thesis appears to run somewhat as follows: Bahá'u'lláh's work and Writings represent essentially one of several efforts by Middle East thinkers to work out a "response" to the challenges posed by European modernity in the form of rationalism, revolution, nationalism, economic upheaval, feminism and other contemporary developments.

Although Oriental in origin, this particular "response", in contrast to various others, was unusually "progressive", "liberal", "idealistic", even "radical". Because it "grew up" in a congenial modernist era, its Author was able gradually to adjust and revise the ideas with which He had been "grappling", through benefiting (in a manner generally insinuated rather than explicitly stated) from successive interactions with other thinkers and movements. By 1862, apparently in order to deal with the problem of religious exclusivity in the

Muslim world, and in response to some form of "private mystical experience", He "decided to make a prophetic claim of his own".

As mentioned above, if such a view had represented the interpretation of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission arrived at by a non-Bahá'í as the result of his objective study of the sources, no Bahá'í institution could have an objection. Its relevance to the concern of the House of Justice about your behavior arises rather from your long-standing and widely recognized involvement with a few present and former members of the Faith who seek to foist this caricature of the Cause on the Bahá'í community, and your perceived identification with their purpose.

The Covenant, the distinguishing feature of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, has been made the central target of this effort (a maneuver that Dr. Cole's book is at particular pains to shore up). Although forced to acknowledge the appointments of `Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian as Interpreters of Bahá'u'lláh's Message, every effort has been made to call such authoritative interpretation into question wherever it presents a problem for the notions being promoted. Similarly, although ostensibly acknowledging that the Universal House of Justice is Head of the Bahá'í Faith today, this opposition has tried by every means possible to undermine the broad authority conferred in Bahá'u'lláh's own words and emphasized in the Master's Will and Testament. (In Dr. Cole's book, this agenda makes its appearance in the conclusion: namely, that the Faith founded by Bahá'u'lláh has failed in its mission because, like "the Khomeinist state in Iran", it has been somehow captured by "fundamentalists", by which term Dr. Cole has repeatedly characterized the members of the Universal House of Justice.)

Why would a Bahá'í or a Bahá'í publisher who is genuinely devoted to advancing Bahá'í scholarship and to encouraging confirmation of believers in Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant seek to persuade his Bahá'í readers that a device intended as the mainspring of an attack on their Faith is **"an indispensable book for any serious student of Bahá'í history"**? How could an effort to represent to the Bahá'í community such a work as **"a brilliant, scholarly analysis of the life and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh"** serve the Cause of God? What moral benefit do you imagine a Bahá'í reader could conceivably derive from taking seriously the theories of an individual whose apparently ungovernable malice has made his activities the focal point of contention and disharmony among any believers unwise enough to be influenced by him?

Indeed, what relevance do Dr. Cole's academic credentials, so strongly emphasized in your letter of 8 May, have to the moral and spiritual issue raised in the letter from the National

Spiritual Assembly? Clearly, no reader, Bahá'í or otherwise, would be interested in reading a supposedly scholarly study whose author lacked the relevant scholarly qualifications. Nor, presumably, would any publisher, Bahá'í or otherwise, promote a work from such an unqualified source. It is both meaningless and disingenuous to argue that these qualifications, however valid in themselves, assure that a publication meets the moral and spiritual standards that are made explicitly clear in the Writings of the Faith whose interests Kalimat's activities are ostensibly designed to serve.

The assumption of Bahá'í institutions is that the purpose motivating a group of believers to create a publishing house that enjoys privileged access to the Bahá'í community is in order to promote the advancement of the Bahá'í Cause. The House of Justice has always assumed — as is no doubt the case with Bahá'ís generally — that this was the desire that motivated you and your associates to create Kalimat Press. If some different conception of purpose underlies the Kalimat enterprise, then it is essential that you advise the United States National Spiritual Assembly of the facts of the situation, frankly, unequivocally, and without delay.

The House of Justice calls on you to meditate profoundly on the questions raised in the foregoing, as these issues bear directly on the relationship that binds you to your Lord. Does not the Master in His Will and Testament itself, specifically warn: "According to the direct and sacred command of God we are forbidden to utter slander, are commanded to show forth peace and amity, are exhorted to rectitude of conduct, straight-forwardness and harmony with all the kindreds and peoples of the world"? Does He not, in that same foundation document of the Cause, counsel all of us: "O ye beloved of the Lord! Strive with all your heart to shield the Cause of God from the onslaught of the insincere, for souls such as these cause the straight to become crooked and all benevolent efforts to produce contrary results"?

The impressive services that you have rendered the Faith, with __*'s loving support, represent for you a spiritual treasure. God forbid that so precious a capital should be squandered. While there is yet time, the House of Justice earnestly appeals to you to turn away from the course on which you have long been set, a course that has been marked by steady spiritual deterioration and that will lead to grievous loss in both this world and the next. As you will recall, because the matter was of direct concern to her,* __ asked urgently to be included in your discussion with ___ and ___. Because these issues continue to bear so immediately on the well-being of your family, you need to recognize your moral obligation to take her fully into your confidence also on the contents of this present letter.

In the past, you have expressed bewilderment that your actions should have required the intervention of senior Bahá'í institutions. **The House of Justice expects that you have now understood clearly what is at stake and that you will resolve, unambiguously and at once, to abandon the course you have, alas, been pursuing.**

The House of Justice will pray ardently at the Holy Threshold that you will be granted the courage and will to meet the spiritual challenge you face.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Comments

August 4. On this date in 1911, the diary of Juliet Thompson records that 'Abdu'l-Bahá "did not attend the Universal Races' Congress. They had asked Him to speak on philosophy and to make no reference to religion, so He sent a representative, Tamaddunu'l-Mulk."

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

August 4. On this date in 1911, the diary of Juliet Thompson records that 'Abdu'l-Bahá "did not attend the Universal Races' Congress. They had asked Him to speak on philosophy and to make no reference to religion, so He sent a representative, Tamaddunu'l-Mulk. (Tamaddunu'l-Mulk is about four feet high and his name means The Civilization of the Country.)"

Comments

August 4. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi stated that "A marriage between two souls...inspiration to other Bahá'ís, as well as to non-believers." In 1957 he warned a Bahá'í couple that "if as registered believers you are married in a Christian ceremony, you will lose your voting rights."

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

August 4. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer stated that "A marriage between two souls, alive to the Message of God in this day, dedicated to the service of His Cause, working for the good of humanity, can be a potent force in the lives of others and an example and inspiration to other Bahá'ís, as well as to non-believers." On May 5, 1957, Shoghi Effendi warned a Bahá'í couple that "if as registered believers you are married in a Christian ceremony, you will lose your voting rights."

Marriage Between Two Bahá'ís Can Be a Potent Force in the Lives of Others
"He hastens to wish you both every happiness in your forthcoming marriage, and he hopes that it will not only be a blessing to you both, but to the Faith as well.

"A marriage between two souls, alive to the Message of God in this day, dedicated to the service of His Cause, working for the good of humanity, can be a potent force in the lives of others and an example and inspiration to other Bahá'ís, as well as to non-believers."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, August 4, 1943)

On May 5, 1957, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated that "he is surprised that you should have been advised by fellow-Bahá'ís that you could have a Christian

marriage, in view of the fact that you are both Bahá'ís. It is only fair to tell you that, **if as registered believers you are married in a Christian ceremony, you will lose your voting rights.**" The letter continues, "Bahá'ís must, in view of the condition of the world today, stand forth firmly and courageously as followers of Bahá'u'lláh, obeying His Laws, and seeking to build his World Order. Through compromise we will never be able to establish our Faith or win others' hearts to it. This involves often great personal sacrifice, but we know that, when we do the right thing, God gives us the strength to carry it out, and we attract His blessings. We learn at such times that our calamity is indeed a blessing."

5 May 1957

Miss ... and Mr.....

Dear .....,

Your letter of April 23rd has been received by the beloved Guardian, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

The question of your marriage is one which is clearly understood by the National Assembly, and the Guardian thought by most of the believers; and he is surprised that you should have been advised by fellow-Bahá'ís that you could have a Christian marriage, in view of the fact that you are both Bahá'ís.

It is only fair to tell you that, **if as registered believers you are married in a Christian ceremony, you will lose your voting rights.**

You did quite right to obtain the permission of your parents; and he hopes that now you will be able to extricate yourselves from this difficult position you find yourselves in, without angering Mr.....

As you are aware, the Guardian feels that the Bahá'ís must, in view of the condition of the world today, stand forth firmly and courageously as followers of Bahá'u'lláh, obeying His Laws, and seeking to build his World Order. Through compromise we will never be able to establish our Faith or win others' hearts to it. This involves often great personal sacrifice, but we know that, when we do the right thing, God gives us the strength to carry it out, and we attract His blessings. We learn at such times that our calamity is indeed a blessing.

He will pray for the satisfactory solution of your problem.

With warm Bahá'í greetings, R. Rabbani.

May the Almighty guide, bless & sustain you, & aid you to promote the vital interests of His Faith,

Your true brother, Shoghi

Comments

August 7. On this date in 1928, the "Bahá'í" trademark (Trade-Mark 245,271) was registered with the United States Patent Office.

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

August 7. On this date in 1928, the "Bahá'í" trademark (Trade-Mark 245,271) was registered with the United States Patent Office.

On March 31, 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that "the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion..."

Comments

August 12. On this date in 1868, Bahá'u'lláh and his companions where exiled from Edirne to Acre due to a decision made by "Sultan Abdulaziz and his cabinet in reaction to Azali complaints and the importuning of the Iranian ambassador."

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

August 12. On this date in 1868, Bahá'u'lláh and his companions where exiled from Edirne to Acre due to a decision made by "Sultan Abdulaziz and his cabinet in reaction to Azali complaints and the importuning of the Iranian ambassador."

Juan Cole describes some of the political atmosphere in the Ottoman Empire at the time of this exile in his "Lawh-i-Fu'ád: notes by Juan Cole".

Of note,

The Tablet of Fuad was written to commemorate the death of Kecicizade Fuad Páshá in Nice of heart trouble, in February, 1869. Therefore it was presumably penned in late winter or early spring of that year, during Bahá'u'lláh's close confinement in the fortress of Acre (Akká). Fuad Páshá was the son of a famed poet, and he himself studied medicine. Although Fuad Páshá is presented in this tablet as a despot, he is remembered in Turkish historiography rather as a reformer. Born in Istanbul in 1815, he was among the foremost planners and implementers of the Tanzimat or reorganization of the Ottoman administration in the nineteenth century so as to bring it closer to modern Western standards. Because of his fluent French, he was able to enter and rise high in the foreign ministry. In 1840 he was first secretary of the Ottoman Embassy in England.

...

Fuad Páshá was intimately involved in decisions affecting Bahá'u'lláh. He was grand vizier in 1863 when Bahá'u'lláh was brought from Baghdad to Istanbul, presumably to remove him from close proximity to his followers in Iran and also to investigate whether Babism under his leadership might be politically useful to the Ottomans in the relations with Iran. (In this regard the summoning of Bahá'u'lláh to Istanbul prefigures Abdulhamid II's attempt to use Iranians such as Sayyid Jamálu'd-Din al-Afghani and Mírzá Áqá Khán Kirmani for political purposes vis-a-vis Iran during his campaign for pan-Islam during the 1880s and 1890s). Fuad Páshá must certainly have taken the decision to rusticate Bahá'u'lláh to Edirne (Adrianople) in November of 1863. He was also involved, as grand vizier and then foreign minister, in making the decision to send Bahá'u'lláh to Acre nearly five years later. As a defender of the more secular values of the Tanzimat reforms, Fuad Páshá was probably suspicious (as we know his colleague Mehmet Emin Alí Páshá was) of Babism as an old-style theocratic Mahdist movement that attacked modernity. In 1866 Alí Páshá told the Austrian ambassador in Istanbul that Bahá'u'lláh, then in exile in Edirne, was "a man of great distinction, exemplary conduct, great moderation, and a most dignified figure" and spoke of Babism as "a doctrine which is worthy of high esteem." He went on to say, however, that he still found the religion politically unacceptable because it refused to recognize a separation of religious and temporal authority. From the reformers' point of view a messianic movement such as Babism, whatever its virtues, threatened the achievements of the Tanzimat by seeking to put all authority, religious and secular, back in the hands of a charismatic spiritual leader. I would argue that, ironically, Bahá'u'lláh was moving away from a theocratic model toward one that acknowledged the autonomy of the civil state, and that there was a convergence between his thought and the Tanzimat that, tragically, the Ottoman state was unable to grasp because of Babism's previous reputation as a vehicle for radical theocracy.

Around the fall of 1867, Bahá'u'lláh in Edirne wrote a letter (The Tablet of the Kings or Súrat al-Mulúk) apostrophizing the world's rulers, in which he addressed Ottoman cabinet officials and to Sultan Abdulaziz. Bahá'u'lláh therein disavows any theocratic or mahdist pretensions, denying that he wishes to lay hold on the worldly possessions of these high officials, and insisting that he is not in rebellion against the Ottoman Sultán. He does say that Sultán AbdulAzíz should be grateful to God for having made him "Sultán of the Muslims," and calls him the "shadow of God on earth." He thus underlines that the civil state derives its ultimate authority from God, but that Bahá'u'lláh's coming does not challenge in any way its authority, since he wishes only to give ethical and spiritual counsel.

We do not know if the Tablet to the Kings actually was sent to the Sublime Porte, though that seems likely. Its attempt at conciliation, in any case, failed. By spring of 1868 Sultan Abdulaziz and his cabinet, in reaction to AzAlí complaints and the importuning of the Iranian ambassador, had decided to exile Bahá'u'lláh and his companions from Edirne to Acre. Grand Vizier or First Minister Alí Páshá and Foreign Minister Fuad Páshá were intimately involved in this decision, which had implications for the Ottoman Empire's relations with Iran and also had the potential to raise protests from the European ambassadors concerned about freedom of conscience. But the motives for taking this step among the high Ottoman elite probably differed. Fuad and Alí could have cared less about Islamic orthodoxy, but they wanted to please Iran for reasons of Realpolitik. Ironically, they may also have worried about the Bábís as Muslim critics of their autocracy. The Islamic backlash against the secularizing Tanzimat reforms had taken two forms. One was the reactionary critique by the conservative Ottoman Muslim clergy (ulema), which had been implicated in the 1858 Kuleli revolt against the Westernizing government. Many of Bahá'u'lláh's statements in his letters to the Ottoman state, calling it back to God, and critiquing its secularizing principles, could have been read as belonging in this reactionary tradition. The other Islamic response was that of the Young Ottomans, a society founded in 1865, who combined an interest in Islamic mysticism and culture with an Ottoman nationalism and a commitment to parliamentary governance and civil rights. Many of these individuals were government translators and had a good knowledge of European languages and of the Enlightenment tradition of thinking about government and rights. One of these was named Sadik [Sadiq] Effendi, and he almost certainly met Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá in the fortress of Acre (Akká).

...

This fascinating glimpse into the cultural and political situation of the Ottoman empire in 1868 provides obvious further context to Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Fuad. It suggests, for one thing, that **predictions of the Sultán's downfall, such as Bahá'u'lláh made in that Tablet, were not unusual but rather were commonplaces of the religious discourse of the time.** Second, it shows how a mosque preacher at the time might get enough Western education to be considered a member of the *effendi* (Westernized secretary) class, and how such men were mixing an Islamic critique of what they saw as Fuad and Ali's extreme Westernization with an Enlightenment critique of their top-down, highly authoritarian approach to government. I suppose there is a parallel between the `republicanism' of these Muslim Young Ottomans and the similar pro-republican stance that the American Baptists took during the 1776 revolution. Third, and most suggestive of all, the French

periodical describing Sadik Effendi's exile to the Fortress of Akká is dated Feb. 28, 1869!! It seems to me almost certain that he interacted with the Bahá'ís also imprisoned in the fortress, and while Bahá'u'lláh had his own reasons to condemn Fuad Páshá, his likely dialogue with Young Ottoman thought of the time is probably part of the picture. Note that at that moment, Young Ottomans like Namik Kemal were in exile in London, calling for British-style parliamentary governance in the Ottoman empire, and that Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Queen Victoria, written in Akká sometime 1868-1869 also did. It is not impossible, in fact, that Sadik Effendi was able surreptitiously to correspond with other Young Ottomans who reported developments to him.

...

Now Bahá'u'lláh turns to a prophecy similar to but more specific than his jeremiads in the Tablet of the Premier (Súrat ar-Ra'ís) addressed to Alí Páshá. Speaking with the voice of God (using the royal "we"), Bahá'u'lláh predicts that Alí Páshá, then grand vizier, will be deposed (the verb is 'azala, which is used of deposing kings). He says, too, that God will "lay hold" (the verb is akhadha, to take, seize) of Sultán AbdulAzíz (he is called amiruhum, literally, "their prince" or "their commander"). **Although Bahá'u'lláh was correct that neither of these powerful men had long at the top in 1869, his prophecy, if taken literally, actually reverses their true fates.** Alí Páshá was never deposed, but rather died in office in 1871. It was Sultán AbdulAzíz who was deposed, in the Constitutional Revolution of spring, 1876, shortly after which he committed suicide. Obviously, if Bahá'u'lláh had merely meant to predict that eventually these two men would die, then the prophecy was not very remarkable. Rather, he seems to have believed that Alí Páshá would fall from the Sultán's favor, and that some dramatic event would overtake the Sultán. Even contemporaries such as Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl Gulpaygani, who became a Bahá'í in 1876 on hearing of the Sultán's fall, had demanded that the latter meet some extraordinary fate before he would accept that the prophecy in the Tablet of Fuad had been fulfilled. Taken together with Bahá'u'lláh's prediction in the Tablet of the Premier that turmoil would overtake the Ottoman empire and his advocacy from his early Acre years of parliamentary democracy, he does seem to have been prescient about the imminence of the First Constitutional Revolution). Indeed, the matter of Alí Páshá never being deposed seems minor in comparison.

It is important to note how political Bahá'u'lláh's statements in this tablet are, and how candidly seditious. Any published or openly circulated criticism of the Sultán and his ministers, who still presided over an absolute monarchy despite their moves toward cabinet government, was strictly forbidden and punishable by death. Had the Tablet of

Fuad fallen into Ottoman hands, it could well have led to Bahá'u'lláh's summary execution. As noted above, the only other group that engaged in a similar critique of Fuad Páshá and Alí Páshá, charging them with being overly authoritarian and arguing that the Tanzimat abandonment of spirituality had gone too far, while working for British-style parliamentary governance, was the Young Ottomans (as noted above). This group of intellectuals, many of whom had a Western education and who were well aware of the U.S. Bill of Rights and the French Rights of Man, had a more mainstream political style than did Bahá'u'lláh. But despite his Miltonian imagery, his prophetic rhetorical style, and his Bábí passion, by 1869 Bahá'u'lláh was advocating a political program in the Ottoman Empire and Iran that differed very little from that of Young Ottomans such as Namik Kemal. (In his Tablet to Queen Victoria of 1868 or 1869, he advocated parliamentary rule, another value that was strictly prohibited in Ottoman political discourse). **The stark Bahá'í turn to political quietism from the 1930s has resulted in a view of Bahá'u'lláh that reads back into his period the later skittishness about politics, a view made possible only by ignorance of Ottoman imperial policy of the time with regard to politics and censorship. The Tablet of Fuad is as radical a document in its own time as Tom Paine's revolutionary pamphlets were.**

The last part of the Tablet of Fuad appears to contain a condemnation of Mírzá Yahyá Subh-i Azal (d. 1912), Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother and a widely recognized leader of the Bábís, with whom Bahá'u'lláh was in competition for the leadership of the Bábí community. Despite the disadvantages of his confinement in the fortress of Acre, Bahá'u'lláh appears to have been already well on the way to winning over most of the Bábís by his assertion that he was the promised one of the Báb. Finally, there is a passage about God having seized or taken "al-Mahdi." The Mahdi is, of course, the Islamic promised one who is expected to fill the world with justice after it had been filled with injustice. I am not sure whether this is an ironic way of referring one last time to Fuad Páshá, or whether it is the name of an enemy of Bahá'u'lláh's who had recently died. "Mihdí" is a common Iranian personal name. Khazeh Fananapazir has wrote to me that this Mahdi was in fact an Azali, and was the recipient of the Kitáb-i Badí` (The Book of Wonder), Bahá'u'lláh's major apologia to the Bábís. This Mihdí was in the circle of Sayyid Muhammad Isfahani, and had written a fierce denunciation of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Tablet of Fuad was called by Baron Rosen a "victory hymn" in celebration of an enemy's death. This is an apt description, but this short piece is much more than that. It condemns the autocratic leadership style of the Tanzimat men, with their vision of modernization dictated from above. It playfully pokes fun at their increasing secularization

by depicting one of them at the gates of hell surrounded by vengeful angels, who strike him down for his impudence, taunt him for his unbelief and his despotic deeds, and unceremoniously dump him into the inferno. **Fuad Páshá is lambasted as more of a tyrant than Pharaoh, and the entire Ottoman state is thus painted with the same brush.** The issues of rights and due process are also key to this tablet. Fuad's crime is to condemn the Bahá'ís to imprisonment without proof of any wrongdoing on their part. Because of their iniquity and despotism, the top three officers of the Ottoman state are here consigned to unpleasant ends. Fuad Páshá suddenly dies at a relatively young 53 or 54, far from home and from his loved ones. The deposition of Alí Páshá is predicted. And it is said that God would lay hold upon the Sultán. The correspondence between their mistreatment of Bahá'u'lláh and his companions and their actual or predicted fates posited in this tablet recalls the conviction among Sufi leaders that the fates of kings and dynasties depend upon how well they treat the mystic masters, and, of course, it echoes the sermons and newspaper articles of progressive Muslim Ottoman dissidents who also predicted an early end to the reign of Sultán AbdulAzíz. But in going on to specify actual mechanisms for the redress of such injustices, such as adoption of a rule of law, the safeguarding of individual rights, and parliamentary governance, Bahá'u'lláh makes his jeremiads against the Ottoman pharaohs much more than mere theological gloating, imbuing them instead with importance for the history of thinking about human rights and democracy in the modern Middle East.

Comments

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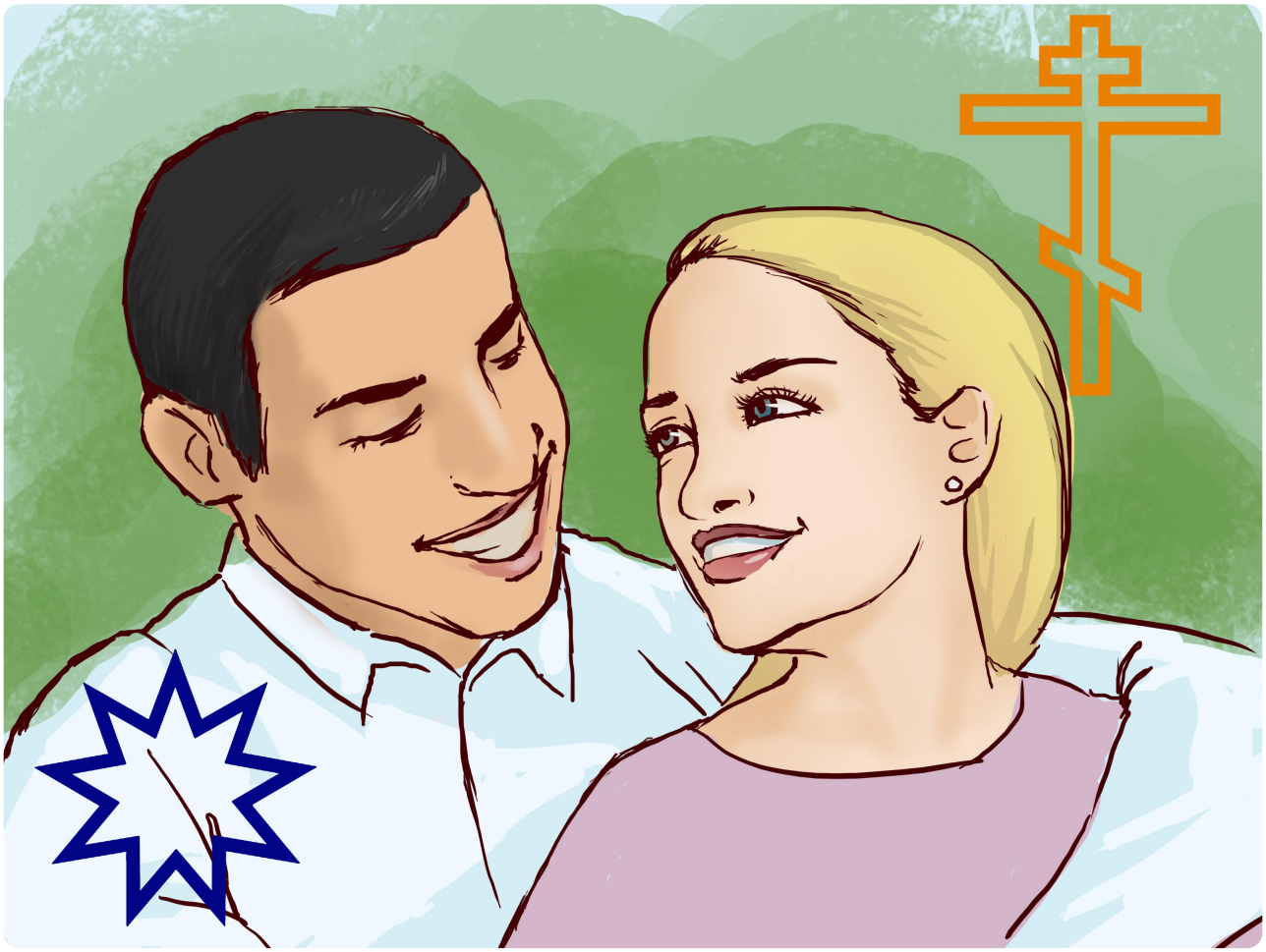
1240. Marriage to Non-Bahá'í, Consent of Parents of Both Parties Required

"Regarding the question whether it is necessary to obtain the consent of the parents of a non-Bahá'í participant in a marriage with a Bahá'í: As Bahá'u'lláh has stated that the consent of the parents of both parties is required in order to promote unity and avoid friction, and as the Aqdas does not specify any exceptions to this rule, the Guardian feels that under all circumstances the consent of the parents of both parties is required."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, August 12, 1941)



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12 AUGUST 1941

As I survey the activities and accomplishments of the American believers in recent months, and recall their reaction to the urgent call for service, embodied in the Seven Year Plan, I feel overwhelmed by a threefold sense of gratitude and admiration which I feel prompted to place on record, but which I cannot adequately express. Future generations can alone appraise correctly the value of their present services, and the Beloved, Whose mandate they are so valiantly obeying, can alone befittingly reward them for the manner in which they are discharging their duties.

The virtual completion of a thirty-year-old enterprise, which was initiated in His days and blessed by His Hand, is the first and foremost accomplishment that must shed imperishable luster not only on the administrative annals of the Formative Age of the Faith, but on the entire record of the signal achievements performed in the course of the First Century of the Bahá'í Era. The steady expansion and consolidation of the world mission, entrusted by that same Master to their hands, and set in operation after His passing, constitutes the second object of my undying gratitude to a community that has abundantly demonstrated its worthiness to shoulder the superhuman tasks with which it has been entrusted. The spirit with which that same community has faced and resisted the onslaught of the enemies of the Faith who, for various reasons and with ever-increasing subtlety and malice, have persistently striven to disrupt the administrative machinery of an Order, foreshadowed by the Bab, enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, and established by 'Abdu'l-

Bahá, is yet another testimony to the unrivalled merits and the eminent position attained by its privileged members since the ascension of the Center of the Covenant.

The extinction of the influence precariously exerted by some of these enemies, the decline that has set in in the fortunes of others, the sincere repentance expressed by still others, and their subsequent reinstatement and effectual participation in the teaching and administrative activities of the Faith, constitute in themselves sufficient evidence of the unconquerable power and invincible spirit which animate those who stand identified with, and loyally carry out the provisions and injunctions of, the Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá.

And now more particularly concerning the prime mover of this latest agitation, which, whatever its immediate consequences, will sooner or later come to be regarded as merely one more of those ugly and abortive attempts designed to undermine the foundation, and obscure the purpose, of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Obscure in his origin, ambitious of leadership, untaught by the lesson of such as have erred before him, odious in the hopes he nurses, contemptible in the methods he pursues, shameless in his deliberate distortions of truths he has long since ceased to believe in, ludicrous in his present isolation and helplessness, wounded and exasperated by the downfall which his own folly has precipitated, he, the latest protagonist of a spurious cause, cannot but in the end be subjected, as remorselessly as his infamous predecessors, to the fate which they invariably have suffered.

Generated by the propelling and purifying forces of a mysterious Faith, born of delusion or malice, winning a fleeting notoriety derived from the precarious advantages of wealth, fame or fortune, these movements sponsored by deluded, self-seeking adventurers find themselves, sooner or later, enmeshed in the machinations of their authors, are buried in shame, and sink eventually into complete oblivion.

The schism which their foolish leaders had contrived so sedulously to produce within the Faith, will soon, to their utter amazement, come to be regarded as a process of purification, a cleansing agency, which, far from decimating the ranks of its followers, reinforces its indestructible unity, and proclaims anew to a world, skeptical or indifferent, the cohesive strength of the institutions of that Faith, the incorruptibility of its purposes and principles, and the recuperative powers inherent in its community life.

Were anyone to imagine or expect that a Cause, comprising within its orbit so vast a portion of the globe, so turbulent in its history, so challenging in its claims, so diversified in the elements it has assimilated into its administrative structure, should at all times be

immune to any divergence of opinion, or any defection on the part of its multitudinous followers, would be sheer delusion, wholly unreasonable and unwarranted, even in the face of the unprecedented evidence of the miraculous power which its rise and progress have so powerfully exhibited. That such a secession, however, whether effected by those who apostatize their faith or preach heretical doctrines, should have failed, after the lapse of a century, to split in twain the entire body of the adherents of the Faith, or to create a grave, a permanent and irremediable breach in its organic structure, is a fact too eloquent for even a casual observer of the internal processes of its Administrative Order to either deny or ignore.

Therein, every loyal and intelligent upholder of Bahá'u'lláh's incomparable Covenant-a Covenant designed by Him as the sole refuge against schism, disruption and anarchy-will readily recognize the hall-mark of His Faith, and will acclaim it as the supreme gift conferred by Him Who is the Lord of Revelation upon the present and future generations who are destined, in this greatest of all Dispensations, to flock, from every creed and religion, to the banner, and espouse the Cause, of His Most Great Name.

Dear friends! Manifold, various, and at times extremely perilous, have been the tragic crises which the blind hatred, the unbounded presumption, the incredible folly, the abject perfidy, the vaulting ambition, of the enemy have intermittently engendered within the pale of the Faith. From some of its most powerful and renowned votaries, at the hands of its once trusted and ablest propagators, champions, and administrators, from the ranks of its most revered and highly-placed trustees whether as companions, amanuenses or appointed lieutenants of the Herald of the Faith, of its Author, and of the Center of His Covenant, from even those who were numbered among the kindred of the Manifestation, not excluding the brother, the sons and daughters of Bahá'u'lláh, and the nominee of the Bab Himself, a Faith, of such tender age, and enshrining so priceless a promise, has sustained blows as dire and treacherous as any recorded in the world's religious history.

From the record of its tumultuous history, almost every page of which portrays a fresh crisis, is laden with the description of a new calamity, recounts the tale of a base betrayal, and is stained with the account of unspeakable atrocities, there emerges, clear and incontrovertible, the supreme truth that with every fresh outbreak of hostility to the Faith, whether from within or from without, a corresponding measure of outpouring grace, sustaining its defenders and confounding its adversaries, has been providentially released, communicating a fresh impulse to the onward march of the Faith, while this impetus, in its turn, would through its manifestations, provoke fresh hostility in quarters heretofore unaware of its challenging implications-this increased hostility being accompanied by a

still more arresting revelation of Divine Power and a more abundant effusion of celestial grace, which, by enabling the upholders of that Faith to register still more brilliant victories, would thereby generate issues of still more vital import and raise up still more formidable enemies against a Cause that cannot but in the end resolve those issues and crush the resistance of those enemies, through a still more glorious unfoldment of its inherent power.

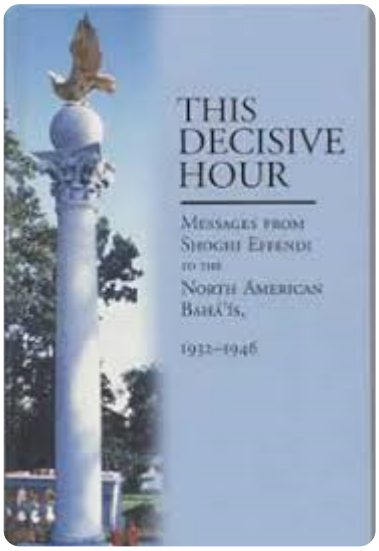
The resistless march of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, viewed in this light, and propelled by the stimulating influences which the unwisdom of its enemies and the force latent within itself both engender, resolves itself into a series of rhythmic pulsations, precipitated, on the one hand, through the explosive outbursts of its foes, and the vibrations of Divine Power, on the other, which speed it, with ever-increasing momentum, along that predestined course traced for it by the Hand of the Almighty.

As opposition to the Faith, from whatever source it may spring, whatever form it may assume, however violent its outbursts, is admittedly the motive-power that galvanizes on the one hand, the souls of its valiant defenders, and taps for them, on the other, fresh springs of that Divine and inexhaustible Energy, we who are called upon to represent, defend and promote its interests, should, far from regarding any manifestation of hostility as an evidence of the weakening of the pillars of the Faith, acclaim it as both a God-sent gift and a God-sent opportunity which, if we remain undaunted, we can utilize for the furtherance of His Faith and the routing and complete elimination of its adversaries.

The Heroic Age of the Faith, born in anguish, nursed in adversity, and terminating in trials as woeful as those that greeted its birth, has been succeeded by that Formative Period which is to witness the gradual crystallization of those creative energies which the Faith has released, and the consequent emergence of that World Order for which those forces were made to operate.

Fierce and relentless will be the opposition which this crystallization and emergence must provoke. The alarm it must and will awaken, the envy it will certainly arouse, the misrepresentations to which it will remorselessly be subjected, the setbacks it must, sooner or later, sustain, the commotions to which it must eventually give rise, the fruits it must in the end garner, the blessings it must inevitably bestow and the glorious, the Age, it must irresistibly usher in, are just beginning to be faintly perceived, and will, as the old Order crumbles beneath the weight of so stupendous a Revelation, become increasingly apparent and arresting.

Not ours, dear friends, to attempt to survey the distant scene; ours rather the duty to face the trials of the present hour, to ponder its meaning, to discharge its obligations, to meet its challenge and utilize the opportunity it offers to the fullest extent of our ability and power.



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The dynamic interplay of the processes of crisis and victory characterizes the development of the Faith.[12] Shoghi Effendi affirms that "the record of its tumultuous history" demonstrates

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August 12. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Regarding the question of paid teachers: As we have no clergy or priests there is no paid career open to Bahá'í teachers. This, however, does not mean that teachers going out to spread the Faith, and unable to support themselves, should not receive money from the National Spiritual Assembly or a Local Assembly. At present it would be quite impossible to spread the Cause if those who arise to serve it as teachers or pioneers were not given financial assistance. All must realize, however, that the moneys they receive are only to enable them to fulfil their objectives, and that they cannot consider themselves permanently entitled to be supported by the Cause. In America the pioneers have made every effort to establish themselves in some position in the place they have gone to settle in, and thus be freed from the necessity of drawing further upon Bahá'í Funds."

1937. House of Justice Defines "Pioneer" and "Pioneering"--There Can Be No Question of "Recalling" a Pioneer from His Field of Service

"From the Bahá'í point of view it is quite clear that a pioneer can be likened to neither an employee nor a minister....

"...We wish to share with you the following points of fundamental importance.

"1. The Secretary of the beloved Guardian wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, on his behalf, on August 12, 1944:

'Regarding the question of paid teachers: As we have no clergy or priests there is no paid career open to Bahá'í teachers. This, however, does not mean that teachers going out to spread the Faith, and unable to support themselves, should not receive money from the National Spiritual Assembly or a Local Assembly. At present it would be quite impossible to spread the Cause if those who arise to serve it as teachers or pioneers were not given financial assistance. All must realize, however, that the moneys they receive are only to enable them to fulfil their objectives, and that they cannot consider themselves permanently entitled to be supported by the Cause. In America the pioneers have made every effort to establish themselves in some position in the place they have gone to settle in, and thus be freed from the necessity of drawing further upon Bahá'í Funds.'

"and to the British National Spiritual Assembly on May 29, 1946:

'Pioneers who volunteer for work, if they are not able to support themselves, should be supported by the National Fund until they either find work or their task is completed.

'Likewise, travelling teachers should be assisted financially to carry out the 'projects' assigned to them. The friends should not for a moment confuse this type of support with the creation of a paid clergy. Any Bahá'í can, at the discretion of the N.S.A., receive this necessary assistance, and it is clearly understood it is temporary and only to carry out a specific plan.

'Bahá'u'lláh Himself has not only enjoined on every one the duty of teaching His Faith, but stated if you cannot go yourself, to send someone in your stead.'

"and in a letter to Mr. Ioas, Chairman of your own National Teaching Committee, on March 5, 1934:

'Concerning the abolition of the institution of paid national teachers, the Guardian wishes to re-affirm his former statements on this matter, and to stress once more that great care be taken to avoid the difficulties and the misunderstandings which in former days had caused so much trouble among the friends. The main point to be emphasized in this connection is that of making the teaching of the Cause not the work of a limited group but the chief duty and responsibility of every Bahá'í. This is why no salaried teachers should any longer exist. But occasionally to defray the expenses of a teaching trip of a certain Bahá'í, particularly when it is done spontaneously, can do no harm to the Cause. Such an action, provided it is done with care and only when circumstances make it necessary, constitutes no violation of the principles already referred to. The danger in all activities of this nature is to give the impression that the teaching of the Cause is an institution,

depending on the support of paid teachers. Those who willingly and with utmost detachment arise to promote the Cause should, undoubtedly, be helped in every way. But they have no claim whatever on the financial help which some friends may freely choose to extend to them.'

"2. As stated in our circular letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies engaged in teaching work among the masses, dated 25th June, 1964: '...no Bahá'í teacher anywhere should consider himself as permanently employed by the Faith. We do not have in the Cause of God any paid career open to Bahá'í teachers....' 'Likewise, when pioneer projects are envisaged, it must be made clear to the pioneer that he must make every effort to establish himself in some position in his pioneering post and thus become freed from the necessity of drawing further on Bahá'í funds.'

"3. The duties of teaching and pioneering are enjoined upon all believers. There are no special categories of believers for these functions. Any Bahá'í who spreads the Message of Bahá'u'lláh is a teacher, any Bahá'í who moves to another area to spread the Faith is a pioneer.

"4. The duty of the Assembly to give financial assistance to a believer who cannot support himself is a general one, and is in no way limited to those who may perform specific services for the Faith.

"5. No special training is required for a pioneer. A believer who leaves his home spontaneously and goes to teach the Faith elsewhere without consulting anybody is as much a pioneer as one who goes after consultation with the committee responsible. This is a matter of principle, no matter how desirable it may be that all prospective pioneers first consult to ensure the best use of their services.

"6. Similarly, there can be no question of 'recalling' a pioneer from his field of service. If a committee is providing a pioneer with financial assistance it can terminate this assistance whenever it judges it right and proper, in which case it would, in all justice, offer the pioneer his travel expenses to return to his home or to go to some place where he could earn his living--but this is quite different in principle from recalling the pioneer. In many instances the pioneer's intention when going to his chosen goal is to put his roots down and make it his home.

"7. A pioneer who goes to the area of jurisdiction of another National Spiritual Assembly comes under the authority of that Assembly, and the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States ceases to have any authority over him. The matter of financial assistance to

such a pioneer, should he need it, is arranged on a basis of expediency. Usually, for simplicity's sake, the National Assembly of origin continues to give assistance direct to the pioneer concerned until he becomes self-supporting or until his own National Spiritual Assembly is able to take over the responsibility. As far as the matter of control is concerned, it would be quite in order and perfectly legal to arrange for the pioneer to receive his budget without having any contact whatsoever with the United States National Spiritual Assembly.

"8. A pioneer has no special administrative status except in the case where he goes to a new area where there are no Bahá'ís. He then usually remains the channel of communication between the new Bahá'í group, as it is formed, and the National Committee in charge, until such time as a Local Spiritual Assembly is formed. At that point his special status ceases altogether. Any services he may perform in advising or teaching the new believers spring from the fact that he is an older believer, and not from his being a pioneer. Many pioneers who go to places where Bahá'ís of long standing already live often receive the counsel and spiritual support of the older native believers rather than vice-versa. Similarly there is no special significance in the dwelling of a pioneer--it frequently happens that the homes of some of the new believers, being less cramped than the quarters of the pioneer, are the places used for meetings of the community."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, July 2, 1965)

Comments

August 12. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "that he wished Switzerland to have its own Temple site, which was to be situated near the capital city of Bern and have a clear view of the Bernese Alps, where he had spent so many months of his life walking and climbing."

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

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From page 58 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, in Chapter 5, entitled *A Many Splendoured Personality*...

The last year of the Guardian's life two Swiss pilgrims came to Haifa. Their presence stirred up all his memories of Switzerland and his love for their country poured out in a manner wholly unlike his usual reserve about his personal life and feelings. I had been ill in bed and not present at dinner in the Pilgrim House but when Shoghi Effendi came home he told me he had said everything, about the mountains he had climbed, the walks he had taken, the scenes he loved so much. It was very atypical of him, very rare and a clear index of something deep in his own heart.

He was moved to inform them that he wished Switzerland to have its own Temple site, which was to be situated near the capital city of Bern and have a clear view of the Bernese Alps, where he had spent so many months of his life walking and climbing. On August 12, 1957 he communicated to what was then the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Italy and Switzerland his wishes in this matter. His secretary wrote: "As he explained to, he

is very anxious for Switzerland to purchase a plot, however small in size, and modest a beginning it might be, for the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkar of that country. He feels this should be in the outskirts of Bern, overlooking the Bernese Oberland; and he is very happy to be able to present this land himself to the Swiss Community. No publicity whatsoever should be given to this matter lest an opposition resembling that which has arisen in Germany should be provoked amongst the orthodox element in Bern. Whenever the committee responsible for finding this land has located a suitable plot, he would like your Assembly to inform him of the details." This was a gift of a unique nature, no other community in the Bahá'í world having been thus honoured. The plot of land, almost 2,000 square metres in area, on the outskirts of Bern, overlooks the Gurberthal and from it can be seen the famous Finsteraarhorn, Monch, Eiger and Jungfrau mountains, the scene of many of the Guardian's mountaineering exploits, the scene also of many of the most agonizing hours he passed after the ascension of his grandfather.

Comments

August 12. On this date in 1975, the UHJ stated "If the use of light in any way at all suggests a personification of the Manifestation of God it should not be used, but if it can be done without in any way giving the impression that the Prophet is being...personified then there is no objection..."

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

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343. If Light Suggests Personification of the Manifestation, It Should Not Be Used

"The use of light, either of great intensity or in different colours, needs your careful consideration. If the use of light in any way at all suggests a personification of the Manifestation of God it should not be used, but if it can be done without in any way giving the impression that the Prophet is being represented or personified then there is no objection to its use."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, August 12, 1975)

Comments

August 12. On this date in 1977, the UHJ stated "that the command to cease work during the nine Holy Days is a matter for conscientious obedience by every individual believer...businesses and other undertakings entirely under Bahá'í control they must also close down during the Bahá'í Holy Days."

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

August 12. On this date in 1977, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama stated that "The beloved Guardian made it absolutely clear that the command to cease work during the nine Holy Days is a matter for conscientious obedience by every individual believer. In the case of businesses and other undertakings entirely under Bahá'í control they must also close down during the Bahá'í Holy Days, even though non-Bahá'ís may be members of their staffs."

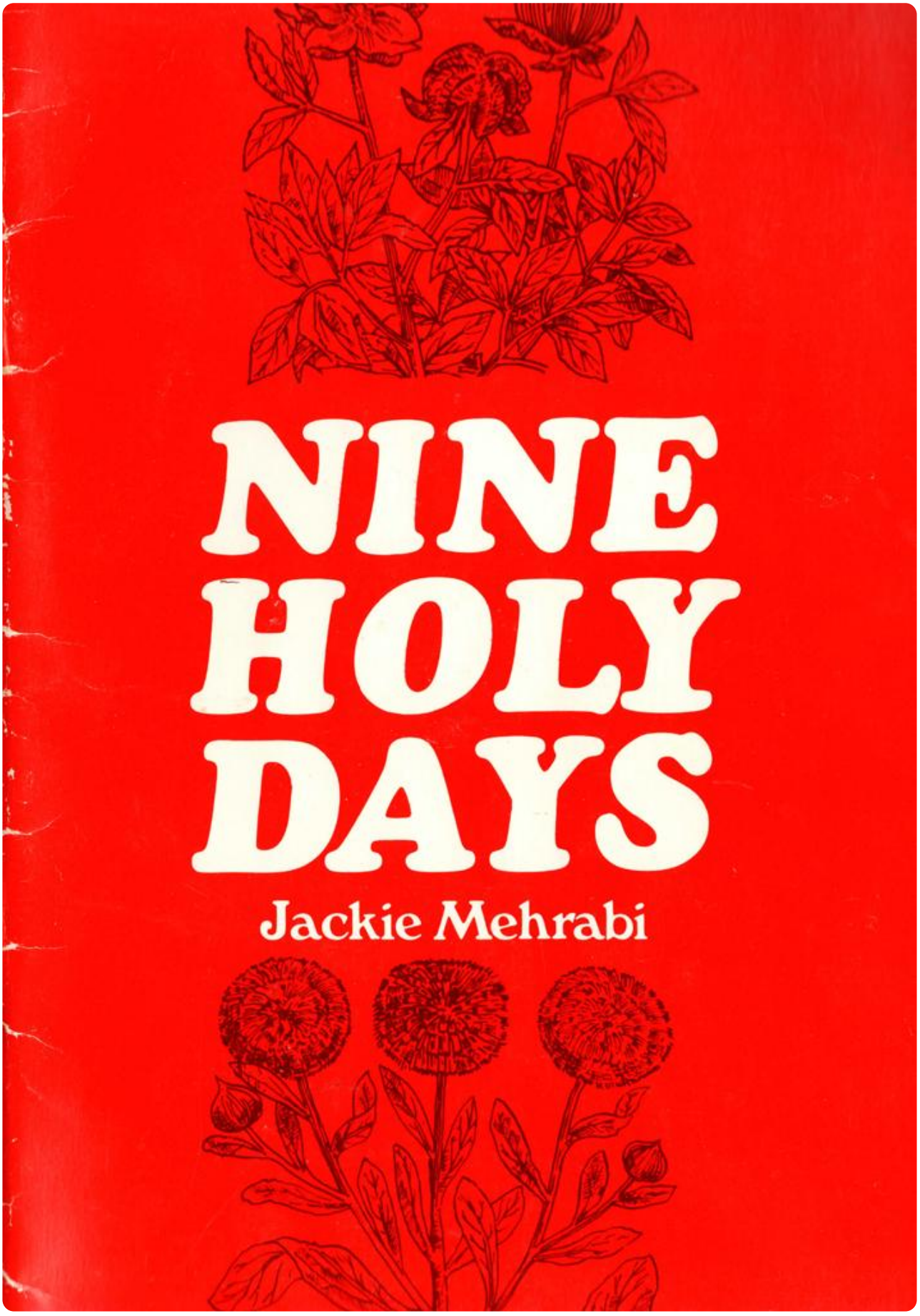
1021. Business Places Owned by Bahá'ís Must Close During the Nine Holy Days --In the Bahá'í Temple Minimal Essential Services May Be Provided

"The beloved Guardian made it absolutely clear that the command to cease work during the nine Holy Days is a matter for conscientious obedience by every individual believer. In the case of businesses and other undertakings entirely under Bahá'í control they must also close down during the Bahá'í Holy Days, even though non-Bahá'ís may be members of their staffs.

"It is fully appreciated that the Bahá'í Temple must be open for worship on the Holy Days and therefore it is permitted to provide, to the minimum extent possible, essential services. Those necessary tasks, such as cleaning and other preparation of the building, which can be carried out on the previous day should be so done and only those duties which must

be performed should be undertaken on the Holy Day. In the case of the Temple it is immaterial whether the workers are Bahá'ís or non-Bahá'ís since it is the duty of the Faith to observe, especially in respect of its own institutions, the command to cease work on the Holy Days."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama


NINE
HOLY
DAYS
Jackie Mehrabi

Comments

August 12. On this date in 2016, John W. Conkling died in Austin, Texas. He served on the staff of the Bahá'í World Center, as secretary of the U.S. National Teaching Committee and as a member of other national and regional committees. He helped establish two Bahá'í communities in ....

submitted2 months agobyA35821363

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John Conkling served at World Center, co-founded local Bahá'í communities

John W. Conkling, an able teacher and administrator of the Faith and an avid student of its history, served on the staff of the Bahá'í World Center, as secretary of the U.S. National Teaching Committee and as a member of other national and regional committees. He helped establish two Bahá'í communities in the Intermountain West and was elected as a delegate to more than a dozen Bahá'í National Conventions from five states.

John passed away August 12, 2016, at age 91. He had lived in Austin, Texas, since concluding his service at the World Center in 1995.

A message of tribute on behalf of the Universal House of Justice praises him as a "stalwart servant of the Blessed Beauty" and notes, "His devoted service to the Cause for more than

six decades, including his distinguished labors at your National Center and later at the Bahá'í World Centre, is recalled with fond admiration."

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States wrote in a letter to John's wife, Eleanore, "His modesty, quiet devotion, integrity, trustworthiness, and nobility of character comprise a rich legacy of good that will assuredly inspire for long years to come all who knew and admired him."

Born in 1924 to Ronald and Miriam Conkling, John grew up in Nebraska and New Mexico. After three years' Army service in India during World War II, he completed studies for a communication degree at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. It was there he met Eleanore, a co-worker at a children's home. They were married in her home state of Missouri in 1950 and moved to Denver, Colorado, where their first two daughters were born. Over the years he worked in the writing/editing, merchandising and insurance fields.

John first learned about the Bahá'í Faith at age 19 from Kay Zinky, a friend of his mother's in Colorado who in later years was honored as a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for her international Bahá'í service. While studying at Northwestern, John and Eleanore investigated the Faith more fully, and joined formally in 1952 in Denver. Over the next two decades, John was called to serve on several committees to foster the spread of the Bahá'í teachings more widely, serving areas ranging from individual states to the 11-state Western region. He was elected as a National Convention delegate for the first time in 1953, a service for which he was also periodically elected in later years when the Conklings lived in Utah, Idaho, Illinois and Texas. For two years he was a trustee of the now-discontinued International Bahá'í School in Colorado.

The family moved as homefront pioneers in 1956 to Provo, Utah, where they had a third daughter. Their service was instrumental in founding a Local Spiritual Assembly and maintaining it a number of years. John took many opportunities to share the Bahá'í teachings, including a talk about the Faith at a Brigham Young University religion class. Moving to Idaho Falls, Idaho, in 1963, they again helped build its local Bahá'í community and establish an enduring Spiritual Assembly.

Over the years the Conklings hosted many friends and inquirers at fireside meetings and other programs. From his studies of Bahá'í teachings and history, John developed a presentation on the Divine Plan, with visual aids on the cycles of revelation and eras, epochs and stages in the Faith's unfoldment, that he used in many firesides and summer schools.

John was appointed in 1974 as a member of the National Teaching Committee, and his service as its secretary in 1976–1980 required him and Eleanore to return to the Chicago area. As they worked at the Bahá'í National Center in Wilmette and Evanston for five years, John also served on the National Education Committee and the National Public Information Committee.

In 1981 the Conklings were called to join the staff at the Bahá'í World Center, where John served in the purchasing office and later in the Office of the Secretariat of the Universal House of Justice.

After retiring in 1995 and moving to Austin, John served on that city's Spiritual Assembly until a few years ago, many years as its secretary. He continued to exercise his love of Bahá'í history, researching 'Abdu'l-Bahá's 1909–1913 travels outside the Holy Land and archivally digitizing maps and graphics found in various volumes of The Bahá'í World. His intimate familiarity with the writings of the Guardian gave him keen insights into the development of the Administrative Order and the functioning of Bahá'í institutions.

In addition to his wife, Eleanore, John Conkling's survivors include three daughters, Diedre, Martha and Sarah; and six grandchildren.

Comments

August 13. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi stated that "the Bahá'í Faith is above all a way of life. It is not a mere philosophical or social doctrine...to live the Teachings of the Cause should be the paramount concern of every true believer."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 13. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi stated that "the Bahá'í Faith is above all a way of life. It is not a mere philosophical or social doctrine...to live the Teachings of the Cause should be the paramount concern of every true believer."

1570. The Bahá'í Faith is a Way of Life Not a Mere Philosophical or Social Doctrine

"**For the Bahá'í Faith is above all a way of life. It is not a mere philosophical or social doctrine.** It is a closely-knit and harmoniously functioning community, a worldwide spiritual fraternity which seeks to reform the world first and foremost by bringing about a deep inner spiritua l change in the heart of individuals. **To live the Teachings of the Cause should be the paramount concern of every true believer,** and the only way to do so is to commune both in spirit and through actual concrete means with the entire community of the faithful. The Bahá'í Cause encourages community life and makes it a duty for every one of its followers to become a living, a fully active and responsible member of the world-wide Bahá'í fellowship."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 13, 1936)

Comments

August 13. On this date in 1974, the UHJ wrote "By the sacred verse: "Begging is forbidden, and it is also prohibited to dispense alms to a beggar" is meant that mendicancy is forbidden and that giving charity to people who take up begging as their profession is also prohibited."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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409. Begging is Forbidden--House of Justice to Provide for Disabled

"We have been asked to share with you the following extract from one of the Tablets of Abdu'l-Bahá on the subject of begging:

'By the sacred verse: "Begging is forbidden, and it is also prohibited to dispense alms to a beggar" is meant that mendicancy is forbidden and that giving charity to people who take up begging as their profession is also prohibited. The object is to wipe out mendicancy altogether. However, if a person is disabled, striken by dire poverty or becomes helpless, then it is incumbent upon the rich or the trustees to provide him with a monthly allowance for his subsistence. When the House of Justice comes into being it will set up homes for the incapacitated. Thus no one will be obliged to beg, even as the supplementary part of the blessed verse denotes: "It is enjoined upon everyone to earn his livelihood"; then He says: "As to those who are disabled, it devolveth upon the trustees and the rich to make adequate provision for them." By "trustees" is meant the representatives of the people, that is to say the members of the House of Justice.'

"The Universal House of Justice does not wish to go beyond the elucidation given by the Master in the above passage and wishes, for the time being, to leave any matter not entirely covered by this text to the conscience of individual believers."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, August 13, 1974)

Comments

Original Index: 13 | Current Position: 26

August 13. On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice published a memorandum titled "Quotations on Science and Religion."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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Comments

August 13. On this date in 2005, John Hatcher gave a talk titled "Unveiling the Huri of Love" addressing "the issues that science and religion must resolve to become reconciled in their mutually exclusive descriptions of reality."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 13. On this date in 2005, John Hatcher gave a talk titled "Unveiling the Huri of Love" addressing "the issues that science and religion must resolve to become reconciled in their mutually exclusive descriptions of reality...to help discover and forge pathways from these essential questions to the foundational answers so that all may come to understand how physical and metaphysical aspects of reality are, when correctly understood, exact counterparts of each other."

Comments

August 13. On this date in 2006, Peter Khan gave a talk titled "Education, Scholarship, and Global Civilization."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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There are those who are deeply concerned that if their young people embark on education in a secular setting it will weaken their faith; for example, they should not study psychology because it rests on the material concept of human nature and that will take them away from religion. From that perspective, they should not study philosophy, or economics, or sociology, or history, or what ever because it will weaken their religious faith. There are those, perhaps (not many of them, hopefully) who feel that religion contains all the knowledge one needs; as quoted in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, knowledge is a point that the ignorant have multiplied, and by pursuing education in a secular setting one is exposing oneself to this multiplication of ignorance. There are some who have an apocalyptic view of the imminence of catastrophe, which gives rise to the question “why bother with education when the whole rotten mess is going to blow up anyhow?” This creates a pressure on young people not to make a long-term commitment of an educational nature.

Also, within the last few years, with the legitimate pressure for the core activities to be expanded and developed in the Five Year Plan, there are extremists who say that matters are so urgent at this time that we should abandon our long-term pursuits—educational or otherwise –because we have to get these 1500 intensive programs of growth. Their view is that nothing is more important than that, we should give up what ever else we are doing, just do this and maybe later (if there’s time) you can go and get your education.

...

We know that there is some accuracy in these concerns that certain Bahá’ís have expressed. There is some accuracy in the fact that one’s faith can be weakened by secular education, but it is intrinsically an inaccurate statement.

...

As regards the pressure of the moment (the needs of the Five Year Plan and the like) these are legitimate concerns. The House of Justice messages, including its Ridván message and that of 27 December 2005, do quite properly call attention to the pressing need for concerted action on the part of Bahá'ís all over the world in pursuit of the core activities, in developing clusters which can sustain and maintain intensive programs of growth. But these messages also distinguish between priority and exclusivity and the failure to make the distinction between *priority* and *exclusivity* is leading to distortions. We know where the priorities lie, the Five Year Plan, the message of the House of Justice. The House of Justice does not call for exclusivity. Friends here at this conference have spoken to me privately and asked me with great sincerity, "Is it alright to continue to have firesides?" Who am I to say no? Who is the House of Justice to abrogate something laid down by Shoghi Effendi so forcefully as the need for individual teaching, for firesides, for proclamation, for student activities on campus, for all the other things that make Bahá'í life rich and meaningful?

Comments

August 13. On this date in 2011, the New York Times featured an article about Ehsan Yarshater, the former Bahá'í scholar who was Hagop Kevorkian Professor Emeritus of Iranian Studies at Columbia University. The article also mentions Roy Mottahedeh, professor at Harvard University ...

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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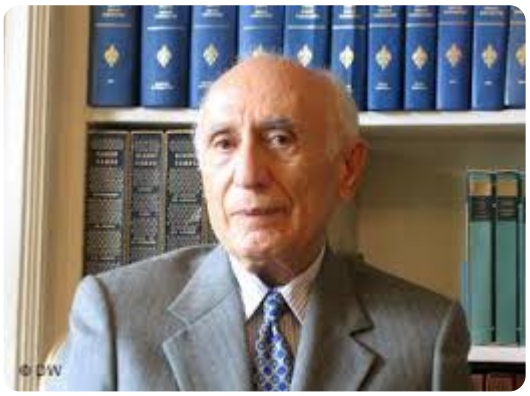
On April 3, 1920, Ehsan Yarshater was born in Hamadan, Iran to a prominent Jewish Bahá'í family. His family was part of a group of Jewish converts from that city who during the late 19th century became the largest group of non-Muslim converts to the Bahá'í Fatih. Ehsan's father received a tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, referring to him as "Yarshater" (meaning "agile friend" which they choose to be their family name. Ehsan Yarshater had a long and distinguished academic career in the field of Iranian studies. He was the founder and editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Ehsan Yarshater dissociated from the Bahá'í Faith as an adult due to reasons related to restrictions imposed by Shoghi Effendi on academic freedom and travel of Iranian Bahá'ís to the West.

He died on September 1, 2018, in California.



Comments

Original Index: 13 | Current Position: 30

August 13. On this date in 2013, Deborah Clark Vance gave a talk titled "Rethinking Women's Nature."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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Comments

August 13. On this date in 2013, Hushmand Fatheazam died in Vancouver, British Columbia. He served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India from 1955 to 1963 when he was elected to the Universal House of Justice where he served until retiring in 2003.

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Hushmand Fatheazam was born into a Baha'i family in Tehran, Iran, on January 8, 1924.

He worked as a curator at the library of the Faculty of Arts at Tehran University from 1950 to 1952, and obtained Masters degrees in arts from Tehran University.

Fatheazam went to India as an pioneer in 1953, where he obtained a second Masters degree in Arts from the Wiswa Bharati University in 1954. Other Iranians who would follow Fatheazam in pioneering to Iran include Payman Mohajer, Borhanoddin Afshin, and Lesan Azadi.

Following his move to India to assist Baha'i development work there, he held the post of lecturer in Persian literature at Punjab University, from 1959 to 1963. He was staff artist at All-India Radio from 1955 to 1963. During that period, he was managing director of the Baha'i Publishing Trust, New Delhi.

Hushmand Fatheazam served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India from 1955 to 1963 when he was elected in the inaugural election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963, serving on that body until retiring at the age of 79 in 2003.

After his retirement, he continued to give presentations, including his talk titled "Some Observations on the Scope and Value of Baha'i Scholarship," which was the 26th Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture at the 32nd annual conference of the North American Association for Baha'i Studies, which was a four-day conference that concluded on September 1, 2008.

While underlining the vital contributions of Baha'i scholarship to the development of the Baha'i Faith and the progress of society, he cautioned against the temptations of intellectual pride that scholars from all traditions have historically been susceptible to, and urged Baha'is to pursue paths of scholarship with the utmost humility.

Mr. Fatheazam promoted scholarship as the continued independent search for truth incumbent upon all human beings. He highlighted the importance of this role by emphasizing the two identities of the Baha'i Faith, one as a religion, described through the analogy of the tree, and one as a limitless reality, described through the analogy of light.

A poet, author and playwright, he wrote an introduction to the Baha'i Faith, *The New Garden*, which has been translated into some 109 languages. He was married to Mrs. Shafiqih Fatheazam (nee Farzar-Asdagh) with whom he had three children, including his son Shahbaz.

He died on August 13, 2013 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Comments

August 14. On this date in 1914, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed a tablet to Louise R. Spencer Waite, who was also known as the Handmaiden of God and named Shahnaz.

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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HE IS GOD

O THOU SWEET VOICED SHAHNAZ

The melody which thou didst raise for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar has reached the ears of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It was a very sweet and heart touching melody because it contained the praise and glorification of his Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. Spend all thy time in the concentration of thought upon God. Compose and attune the Divine mysteries that thus the hearts may be quickened and result in the joy and happiness of the hearers/

Upon thee be BAHÁ-El-ABHÁ

Signed 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas

Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab

Haifa, Syria August 14th 1914

Comments

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August 14. On this date in 1938, Darrell "Dash" Crofts was born. Half of the duo Seals and Crofts, Dash Crofts has long been a member and public advocate of the Bahá'í Faith.

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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Comments

August 14. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís stating he "was shocked and indignant to hear of the conduct of certain of the Persian Bahá'í students in Germany which had been so criminal as to lead to their imprisonment."

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14 August 1957 Dear Bahá'í Brother:

Your Assembly's communications with their enclosures and material sent under separate cover have all arrived safely, and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf, and to acknowledge receipt of the letters dated as follows: June 14, August 8 and 28, September 2, October 27, November 19 and 22 and December 4 and 26, 1956; and January 1 and 15, February 4, March 1, 2 and 9, April 2, 16 and 25, June 14, 19 (two) and July 3, 8 and 19.

As a number of questions raised in your letters have been answered by cable, or through the Secretary, I will not go into them again here.

He thanks your Assembly for the trouble you took in sending him the samples of tiles in connection with the Archives floor. A rubber tile has now been ordered from England, which he considers will be satisfactory.

As a member of your National Assembly has so recently visited Haifa, namely, dear Mrs. Anna Grossmann [wife of Hermann Grossman and mother of Hartmut Grossman], and many of the points concerning the Temple land were discussed with her, she has no doubt by now conveyed to you the Guardian's views.

He feels that the German National Assembly must be extremely practical in handling this matter and expedite the purchase of a site for the Temple as soon as possible, and without strings attached, such as the necessity to build a road at our expense, or to raise loans from other National Bodies, which is extremely impracticable and very unwise. The German friends have money for their land and the beginning of their Temple on hand, and should conserve this money for the purpose stipulated, and neither ask other National Bodies for loans, nor become involved with municipal or state authorities, who want to get as much out of the Bahá'ís as possible, while, at the same time, it would seem, giving them as little help as possible.

He also discussed with Mrs. Grossmann certain matters she brought up as regards the Temple design and size. She has no doubt reported his views to your Assembly.

He was shocked and indignant to hear of the conduct of certain of the Persian Bahá'í students in Germany which had been so criminal as to lead to their imprisonment. He feels that your Assembly must keep before its eyes the balance specified by Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, in other words, justice, reward and retribution. Although the Cause is still young and tender, and many of the believers inexperienced, and therefore loving forbearance is often called for in the place of harsh measures, this does not mean that a National Spiritual Assembly can under any circumstances tolerate disgraceful conduct, flagrantly contrary to our Teachings, on the part of any of its members, whoever they may be and from wherever they may come. You should vigilantly watch over and protect the interests of the Bahá'í Community, and the moment you see that any of the Persian residents in Germany, or, for that matter, German Bahá'ís themselves, are acting in a way to bring disgrace upon the name of the Faith, warn them, and, **if necessary, deprive them immediately of their voting rights if they refuse to change their ways.** Only in this way can the purity of the Faith be preserved. Compromise and weak measures will obscure the vision of its followers, sap its strength, lower it in the eyes of the public and prevent it from making any progress.

The National Assembly is the guardian of the welfare of the Faith, a most sacred and heavy responsibility and one which is inescapable. They must be ever vigilant, ever on the lookout, ever ready to take action, and, on all matters of fundamental principle, refuse to compromise for an instant. Only in this way can the body of the Faith be free of disease.

He feels that you should investigate the situation in ..., **find out who is and who is not a Bahá'í, and insist that its affairs be conducted in a Bahá'í manner by registered Bahá'ís, and that those who have not yet gotten credentials from Persia should be**

placed in a different category, entirely, from those who are registered by your Assembly as voting members, and accepted as believers. The Persian Bahá'ís in many cases, who have either gone to Germany to study or to assist in the work of the Faith with a pure motive, have rendered the German Community inestimable services, and everyone should be duly grateful to them for both their spirit and their example. However, we should not confuse the true believers with those who are not quickened with the spirit of faith, have some ulterior motive, or are indifferent to the reputation they have personally, and the damage they may do the Cause in the eyes of the public. There is all the difference in the world between these two categories, and your Assembly must be ever watchful and ready to take action when necessary.

It is not a normal condition for one-quarter of a community to be composed of a foreign, and therefore floating, element. In spite of the fact that in such countries as England and Germany, in particular, the Persian friends have been of great help in maintaining, and indeed in establishing, new Assemblies and Centres, the National Body must bear in mind that this is not a normal state of affairs. It is the German people in Germany, and the English people in England, who must be the back-bone and the vast majority of the Community. Otherwise, if for some reason the foreign element returns to its home or is forced to leave the country, the Communities dependent on it disintegrate for lack of numbers.

Every effort should be made to encourage the German Bahá'ís, who are so numerous in some of the cities in Germany, particularly in Stuttgart, to go out and take part in the establishment of new Spiritual Assemblies in their own country. This is both their duty and their privilege. The Guardian has pointed out, over and over again, that it is sufficient for fifteen active believers to remain in any one city, even such cities as New York, Chicago and San Francisco. This also applies to Germany, and the Bahá'ís should be encouraged to pioneer on their Home Front, and establish new Spiritual Assemblies, new Groups and new isolated centres. In this way the affairs of the Faith will attract the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh and the believers will be rewarded by Him for doing their duty and accepting the challenge of the present hour. If and when another upheaval takes place in Europe, it will be the big cities that are the danger points. Why then do the Bahá'ís cling to them so tenaciously, when they would be much safer, and serving the interests of the Faith, if they moved away to smaller places?

He does not want the friends to be fearful, or to dwell upon the unpleasant possibilities of the future. They must have the attitude that, if they do their part, which is to accomplish

the goals of the Ten Year Plan, they can be sure that God will do His part and watch over them....

He has been very happy over the formation of the first historic Spiritual Assembly in Athens, an achievement made possible this year through the direct efforts of German pioneers. He greatly appreciates their spirit, and he hopes that, in spite of the departure of some of the American pioneers, the Community will grow in numbers, and the Assembly be preserved next April. Your Assembly should devote particular attention to this matter.

He hopes also that reinforcements can be sent to Crete, as well as to Frisian Islands, where the first results of the devoted labours of the pioneer are beginning to be shown through the enrollment of some natives of those islands....

He has also been greatly encouraged to see the progress made in Austria during the past year. The formation of four Assemblies marks a tremendous step forward in the work in that country, which has too long lagged behind the progress made in Germany. At last, Austria is beginning to bear fruit, and he hopes, through the activities of the Austrian believers and the pioneers who have rallied to their support, as well as through the wise guidance of your Assembly, that the centres will be increased very rapidly and the Spiritual Assemblies multiplied to such a point that he can fix a date for Austria to have her independent National Body. The achievement of this goal rests entirely upon the teaching work and is dependent on the creation of more Assemblies.

He was glad to see that there is great need in Germany for more publications, for more of the literature to be made available in German. Naturally these things are dependent on financial means. However, he was happy to know that a News Letter had been consistently published in Frankfurt, and had been of help to the friends, especially in connection with their Nineteen Day Feasts. Such activities should be stimulated and encouraged by your Assembly. The Bahá'ís are widely spread over the whole country, many of them far from well-to-do, and, however humble the instrument that reaches them, it nevertheless fulfils a great purpose in stimulating and encouraging them. Travelling teachers should be sent out more regularly to visit the different centres, as the two Hands of the Cause in Germany are so overburdened as to make it impossible for them to travel as much as they would like to or should do in the interests of the Faith. Therefore your Assembly should encourage itinerant teachers or teaching trips by any of the friends who are able to offer a certain amount of time to such activities.

He has also been very pleased during the past year to see from the press clipping book he received, how much publicity the Faith has received free of charge, not only in the press

but generally in some of Germany's best-known newspapers. Were it not for the violent opposition met with in connection with the purchase of the Temple land, this would not have been possible, and the friends can clearly see that our activities, when we carry them on persistently and energetically, arouse opposition, which has an extremely salutary effect. In fact, some of the reports in the German newspapers about the opposition the Bahá'ís were meeting with in connection with their Temple site were published in leading French newspapers. The friends should be very encouraged by these evidences of the rising fame of the Faith. They should welcome opposition, and stand firm on all questions of principle. By doing so, they will attract new people to the Faith and encourage the skeptical to embrace our Teachings.

He appreciated receiving the photo of the new N.S.A. and hopes it will accomplish great things during the coming months.

It is not necessary for anyone who wishes to make the pilgrimage to Haifa to ask through your Assembly; they may ask the Guardian direct. The reason this was done in Persia is because the number of the friends is so great that the work involved is too much of a demand on the Guardian's time, and so is handled by the Persian N.S.A. who refer long lists of names to him.

He feels sure the passing of dear Mrs. Reyhani is not without significance and that her devotion, and that of her family, will be the instrument for attracting many hearts to our beloved Faith.

The Guardian assures you one and all of his most loving prayers for the success of your work and that you may be given the strength to carry out burden of responsibility for the prosecution of the Ten Year Plan in your area....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-workers:

The year that has just elapsed, though not one in which the fond hopes entertained for the German Bahá'í Community have been entirely fulfilled, has, none the less, witnessed certain achievements in both the administrative and teaching fields, for which we can feel truly grateful.

There can be no doubt that the problems, obstacles and challenges which have faced the well-tried, long suffering, swiftly maturing community have been formidable, and in some instances, such as to daunt their spirit and discourage their efforts.

The continued and most lamentable division of the German nation, setting up an almost insurmountable barrier between the vast majority of the German followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and their isolated brethren in the eastern territories of their country; ... the prolonged existence of ideological and political barriers impeding contact between the believers residing in the western Zone of Germany and the inhabitants of the territories lying beyond the Iron Curtain and particularly the Baltic States, Moldavia, White Russia, Albania and Rumania, assigned to them according to the provisions of the Ten-Year Plan; the intense conservatism and religious orthodoxy of the people inhabiting the Frisian Islands, Crete and Greece, constituting yet another barrier and raising yet another obstacle in the path of the pioneers who have consecrated themselves to the task of implanting the banner of the Faith in those islands in that historic land, in pursuance of the objectives of the World Spiritual Crusade; the limitations placed upon them by their restricted numbers and modest resources; the temptations and distractions to which a swift return to material prosperity continually and increasingly exposes them--these, no doubt, militate against the speedy and effectual accomplishment of their manifold and sacred tasks.

No need, however, to dwell on the trials, problems and the inherent difficulties with which the community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and, to a lesser extent, their sister community in Austria, are beset during these critical years in the unfoldment of the Ten-Year Plan.

However severe their trials, and disheartening the present situation may appear, they must remember that the Faith to which they owe allegiance has weathered, not so very long ago, storms of a far greater severity that seemed, at times, capable of engulfing and of obliterating its nascent institutions. The newly planted sapling of a divinely conceived administrative order, having driven deep its roots in German soil, bent momentarily under the hurricane which so violently swept over it, and no sooner had the tempest spent its force than it righted itself, and, growing with a fresh vigour, put forth branches and offshoots that now overshadow the entire land, and even stretch out as far as the heart of Austria.

The experience of so miraculous a recovery from so devastating an ordeal should, alone, prove sufficient to infuse an invigorating spirit into those who have been subjected to it, as well as into the new generation who are still close enough to those events to appreciate its extreme violence, such as will not only enable them to withstand onslaughts of still greater severity, but impel them, both young and old, men and women alike, to struggle, with redoubled vigour and deeper consecration, to meet the pressing and the manifold requirements of the present hour.

To answer decisively the charges levelled against them, and the Faith which they represent, by their adversaries and critics, they can do no better than to determine--nay to ensure--that their numerical strength will rapidly increase throughout the length and breadth of their homeland; that the isolated centres, groups and local assemblies will multiply to an unprecedented degree; that every firmly grounded local spiritual assembly is duly incorporated; that the Bahá'í Marriage Certificate and the Bahá'í Holy Days are recognized by the Civil authorities; that the literature of the Faith in German, Russian and those languages spoken in the Baltic States, is not only translated to an unprecedented extent, but broadcast far and wide; and, above all that their zeal, whatever betide them, will remain unquenchable, their spirit indomitable, their loyalty inflexible, their determination to succeed unshakable.

Whilst efforts in this direction are being strenuously exerted by the rank and file of the faithful, a no less energetic action must be taken to ensure that the pioneers in the newly opened virgin territories, in the North as well as in the South will continue to receive adequate guidance and assistance, which will enable them to establish new centres and reinforce the foundation which they have so patiently and devotedly laid. The institution of the National Fund, so indispensable to the vigorous functioning of the multiplying institutions of the Faith, must be generously and systematically supported by the rank and file of the believers, however great the financial sacrifice involved, it is through such sacrifice that these institutions can exert their maximum spiritual influence, and contribute their full share to the expansion and consolidation of the Faith. To their brethren in the Eastern Zone, so gravely handicapped by the unfortunate disabilities which they have, so long and so patiently suffered, consistent support, in whatever way possible, should be extended, and every avenue should be explored to ensure that the flame burning in those valiant hearts, so heavily burdened by cares and anxieties, will not be extinguished. The no less vital obligation to introduce, however tentatively, the Faith in the territories lying beyond the eastern confines of their homeland, and particularly in the Baltic States, must be promptly and seriously considered, for upon it will, to a very great measure, depend the success of the Mission envisaged for them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and now confirmed through the provisions of the Ten-Year Plan. The assistance extended to their brethren and co-partners in Austria, who have lately succeeded in enlarging the scope of their beneficent activities, should, moreover be maintained, nay reinforced, for the purpose of multiplying the local spiritual assemblies, and of hastening thereby the emergence of an independent National Spiritual Assembly in that land. Above all, the burning issue of the purchase of the site and of the construction of the Mother Temple of Europe must be resolutely faced, and, once and for all, definitely settled, even if it becomes necessary to abandon Frankfurt,

situated in the heart of their country, and the national administrative headquarters of their Faith, and substitute for it Stuttgart, as a site, for their first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Whatever is to be done should be expeditiously carried out, for time is fast running out and the Ten-Year Crusade is rapidly and inexorably approaching its midway-point. All eyes, in every continent of the globe where Bahá'ís reside, are eagerly and anxiously watching, expecting the early and definite settlement of these prolonged negotiations, and prayerfully hoping to witness the first evidences of the rise of the noble Structure, the erection of which has been entrusted to the largest and one of the oldest national Bahá'í communities in the European continent.

The divers and formidable obstacles, challenging the spirit and resources of this long-suffering, firmly based, highly-endowed, much admired community, have been considered and enumerated. The vital and inescapable obligations, calling for immediate resolute action, on the part of all of its privileged members, have been touched upon and sufficiently emphasized. Now, if ever, is the time for action, with practically half of the period alloted for the prosecution of a decadelong Crusade already behind us. The German Bahá'í Community, the leading stronghold of the Faith on the European mainland, must not, cannot fail. All its resources, spiritual as well as material, must be mobilized at this hour to ensure the speedy attainment of some of the most glorious objectives of a glorious Crusade.

I fervently plead with its members, particularly with its watchful, painstaking, devoted national elected representatives, to arise as one man and carry to a successful conclusion yet another stage in the unfoldment of their historic Mission.

May He Who through His power called this community into being, nurtured and bestowed upon it His special blessings, crown their present and future efforts with a success that will resound throughout the Bahá'í world.

Shoghi

Comments

August 14. On this date in 1968, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to "Bahá'í Friends" addressing the "Progress of the Nine Year Plan in the United States."

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Progress of the Nine Year Plan in the United States

14 August 1968

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The number and character of achievements of your community since the Nine Year Plan was launched must indeed compel our gratitude. On the homefront, 52 Local Spiritual Assemblies have been formed and 500 new centers have been established. Traveling teachers and pioneers have gone forth from your community in troops, offering all of their resources and their very lives to the Cause. They have scattered to the far-flung fields of the globe to proclaim the glory of God's Revelation; have opened the Turks and Caicos Islands; poured into the Caribbean area carrying the torch of the Faith to new outposts there, and so firmly established the Cause in that chain of islands that a new pillar on which the Universal House of Justice rests was erected. With unfailing generosity, you have assisted your sister communities to acquire Bahá'í properties. Your community has indeed merited the title of "torch-bearers."

In view of the tasks which remain to be achieved, it is evident as we rapidly approach the midway point in the Plan, that your community now faces a challenge of colossal magnitude, for the pace of the work must be greatly accelerated if all the goals are to be won. On the homefront, 206 Local Spiritual Assemblies must be formed, including at least one

in each of the four States where there has as yet been only one established, two in Puerto Rico, and the Assembly in Key West must be reestablished. No less than 787 new centers must be opened to the Faith. Abroad, pioneers and traveling teachers are still needed on every front to continue to carry the Faith forward throughout the entire world. You are called upon for further financial contributions to acquire the remaining properties so urgently needed by your sister communities. A gigantic, collective effort will be required to successfully discharge all these responsibilities.

We think it is important that you phase out the remaining homefront goals of the Nine Year Plan, adopting subsidiary plans for each year between now and Ridván, 1973, bearing in mind the need to consolidate all the goals thus far won. When formulating plans for a consolidation program, to be carried out concurrently with the proclamation of the Faith, particular thought should be given to the twelve States where there is now a minimum of only two Local Spiritual Assemblies. Above all, the duty of deepening the spiritual life of your newly-enrolled co-workers is paramount, for the fate of the entire community depends upon the individual believers. Without the wholehearted support of each and every one of the friends, every measure adopted, no matter how well thought out, is foredoomed to failure. It is the individual believers who must maintain the Local Assemblies and the centers already won at the cost of such great sacrifice. It is they who must, afire with the love of Bahá'u'lláh, go forth to further broaden the base of administrative activity by forming new Assemblies and implanting the standard of Bahá'u'lláh in new localities; who must arise in response to the call to travel to the remote outposts of the Faith and push back the frontiers; and who must, through your wise and loving guidance, become your collaborators in carrying out your God-given mission.

We are deeply cognizant of the tremendous burden of responsibility you carry, but we are confident that your dearly-loved community will arise with a renewed spirit to assume its weighty responsibilities.

We shall offer a special prayer for your Assembly that you will be enabled to carry forward unremittingly all your tasks to their triumphant conclusion.

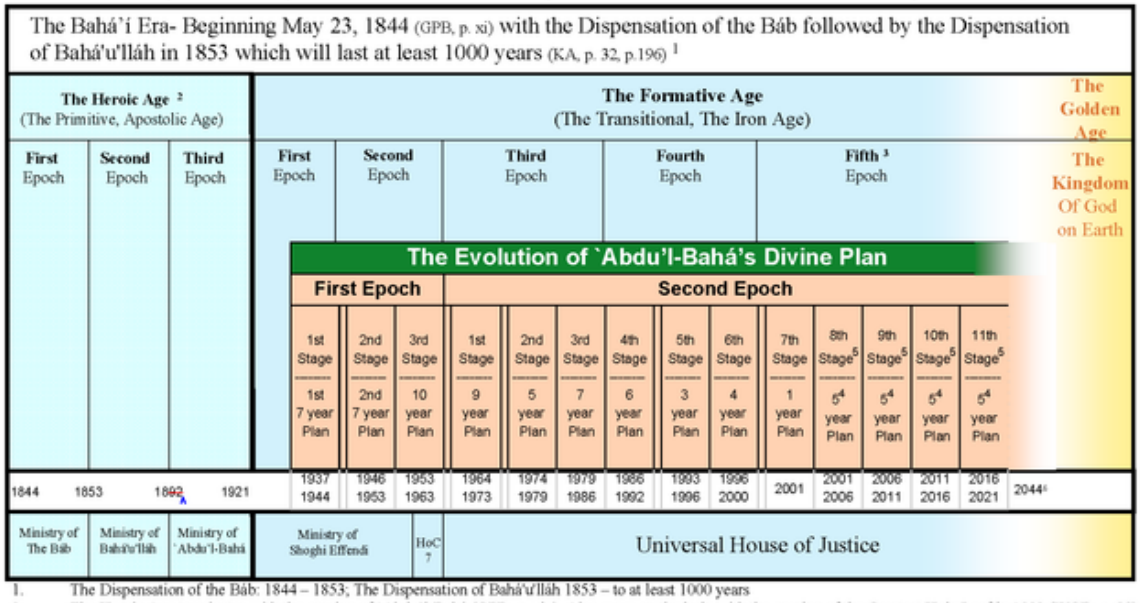
With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

"We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its universal Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh" FWU, p 54

THE MAJESTIC PROCESS: CYCLES, ERAS, AGES, EPOCHS and STAGES

The Bahá'í cycle – "…a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years."WOB, p 102



1. The Dispensation of the Báb: 1844 – 1853; The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh 1853 – to at least 1000 years
2. The Heroic Age terminates with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (GPB, p. xiv). Also more particularly with the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1932 (WOB, p. 98)
3. Fifth Epoch of the Formative Age entered. (UHJ letter 16th January 2001)
4. The 5 Year Plan begins a series of four 5 Year Plans from 2001 – 2021, culminating in the centenary of the inception of the Formative Age. (UHJ letter Ridván 2001)
5. Stage number not yet known but presumed to continue in sequence of numbers from the 8th stage in 2001
6. See This Decisive Hour, p. 95 re: foundation of future civilizations to have been established during the second Bahá'í Century
7. Ministry of the Hands of the Cause. 1957 - 1963

Prepared by: John W. Conkling, assisted in graphics by J. Bernie. Jan. 14, 2004

Comments

August 14. On this date in 1995, Suhayl ʻAlá'í died. An early pioneer to Samoa, he served on LSAs in Samoa, the U.S. and Australia, on the first Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific, the NSA of Samoa, as a Counsellor for Australasia, and as the liaison between Malietoa and the UHJ.

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Suhayl Ahmad ʻAlá'í was born into a Bahá'í family in Tehran on January 5, 1927. His father was Ni'mat'u'lláh, brother of Shu'á'u'lláh, and his mother was Ghodsieh. His fathers parents were Nazimu'l-Hukama, a Bahá'í who served as physician at the court of the Shah, and Bibi Jan, and his mothers parents were Amín-i-Amín, third Trustee of Huqúqu'lláh, and Masoud Khanum. A prominent cousin was Gloria ʻAlá'í Faizi, daughter of Rahmatu'llah Khan 'Ala'i and wife of Hand of the Cause of God Abu'l-Qásim Faizi.

In his youth Suhayl was a member of the Tehran Bahá'í Youth Club, and he later served on several Bahá'í committees related to youth and publications. When he was nineteen his family pioneered to Afghanistan, however they were arrested and sent back to Iran after only nine months due to their religion.

After graduating from High School in May 1947 Suhayl began working in irrigation and water supply for the Ardakani Company until March 1950 when he moved to New Zealand

to attend university. He studied sheep and dairy farming at Massey Agricultural College for four years, representing the College in basketball and soccer in addition to completing his Diploma in Agriculture. He also played for the All New Zealand Basketball Team for two years.

In December 1953 he met Lilian Wyss, an Australian Bahá'í briefly visiting New Zealand before pioneering to Samoa, at a Summer School in Auckland. Lilian Wyss became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Samoa Islands in 1954 and her brother, Frank Wyss, became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Cocos Islands in 1955. Suhayl 'Alá'í married Lilian in Fiji in November 1954 and moved to Samoa with her where they had three children. Suhayl's parents, Ni'mat'u'lláh and Ghodsieh, also pioneered to Samoa living there for four years before moving to Hastings, New Zealand, at the suggestion of Shoghi Effendi.

In 1959 Suhayl was elected to the inaugural Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific. After His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, Head of State of Samoa, became a Bahá'í in 1967 Suhayl served as the liason between him and the Universal House of Justice. In 1968 he was appointed as an inaugural Counsellor for Australasia for an indefinite term, and was reappointed in 1980 when the Universal House of Justice announced that Counsellors would serve five year terms. He was appointed for a second five year term in 1985, and was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Samoa in 1993.

Suhayl assisted in the founding of the American Samoa Chamber of Commerce, drafting its constitution, and was active in the United Nations Organization in Samoa. He helped the Faith by assisting in the purchase of the grounds that the House of Worship of Samoa was built on in 1984.

He died on August 14, 1995 and was buried within the grounds of the Samoan House of Worship with his grave being next the grave of Ugo Giachery. Malietoa Tanumafili II attended his funeral and the Universal House of Justice cabled the following after his passing:

DEEPLY DISTRESSED NEWS PASSING SUHAYL 'ALA'I' WHO RENDERED EXEMPLARY SERVICES PIONEER SAMOA MORE THAN FOUR DECADES, PLAYED VITAL UNFORGETTABLE ROLE PROPAGATION FAITH CONSOLIDATION INSTITUTIONS ENTIRE PACIFIC REGION, SERVED MEMBER FIRST NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY SOUTH PACIFIC, AND LATER OVER TWO DECADES BOARD COUNSELLORS AUSTRALASIA. RECALL WITH PROFOUND ADMIRATION HIS KINDNESS, LOVE PACIFIC PEOPLES, HIS SACRIFICIAL DEDICATION ADVANCEMENT THEIR INTERESTS, HIS ROLE CONSTRUCTION HOUSE OF WORSHIP SAMOA, HIS INVOLVEMENT WORK CAUSE TO LAST HOURS EARTHLY LIFE.

ADVISE HOLDING MEMORIAL SERVICES HOUSE WORSHIP, BAHA'I COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT SAMOA. ALSO REQUESTING NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF AUSTRALIA HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

OFFERING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINE PROGRESS HIS LUMINOUS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES HIS MOTHER, HIS WIFE, AND FAMILY.

Comments

August 15. On this date in 1852, two years after the execution of the Báb in the midst of the Bábí uprisings, a group of Bábís attempted to assassinate Naser al-Din Shah Qajar. It was after the assassination attempt that Bahá'u'lláh and the other Bábí leadership were exiled to Baghdad.

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From Helen S. Goodall, a Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, and Ella Goodall Cooper's "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908," "Exile of Bahá'u'lláh"...

When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the **Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf**, saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.

Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter, and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.

The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to exile Him to Baghdad?" This was accordingly done, and **an escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.* *From Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh was sent to Constantinople, then to Adrianople, then to Akka--by force He was sent to the place where He desired to be, thus fulfilling the prophecies of all the Holy Books. He came by His own Will. Had He simply appeared and declared Himself there, the opposers might have said, "Of course, He has read the prophecies and determined to appear in the Holy Land in order to mislead the people." But we see that He used the natural instruments who thought they were sending Him there by force. This is what we may call a real miracle.

After all, did the Shah accomplish his will, or did Bahá'u'lláh accomplish His Will?

From Nabil's *The Dawn-breakers*, "Chapter XXVI Attempt on the Shah's Life, and its Consequences"...

The Russian minister, as soon as he learned of the action which the government contemplated taking, volunteered to take Baha'u'llah under his protection, and invited Him to go to Russia. He refused the offer and chose instead to leave for Iraq. Nine months after His return from Karbila, on the first day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, in the year 1269 A.H., Baha'u'llah, accompanied by the members of His family, among whom were the Most Great Branch and Aqay-i-Kalim, and **escorted by a member of the imperial body-guard and an official representing the Russian legation, set out from Tihran on His journey to Baghdad.**

In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi alludes to the protection the Russian ambassador gave Bahá'u'lláh on different occasions, first after the attempted assassination of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar and again after the decision to exile Bahá'u'lláh from Iran, expressing his "desire to take Bahá'u'lláh under the protection of his government, and offered to extend every facility for His removal to Russia." In his Súriy-i-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh included the *Lawh-i-Malik-i-Rús,* praising Czar Alexander II of Russia in these terms:

when this Wronged One was sore-afflicted in prison, the minister of the highly esteemed government (of Russia)—may God, glorified and exalted be He, assist him!—exerted his utmost endeavor to compass My deliverance. Several times permission for My release was granted. Some of the 'ulamás of the city, however, would prevent it. Finally, My freedom was gained through the solicitude and the endeavor of His Excellency the Minister. ...His Imperial Majesty, the Most Great Emperor—may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist

him!—extended to Me for the sake of God his protection—a protection which has excited the envy and enmity of the foolish ones of the earth.

Comments

> Original Index: 15 | Current Position: 38

August 15. On this date in 2002, "The Oak Ridger" carried a story written by David Sperry, "a publicist for area Bahá'ís," about an event on "July 9 at "Heart of the Hills" in Sevier County to commemorate the execution of the Báb." No mention is made about the Bábi uprisings.

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Comments

Baha'i History - August 15. On this date in 1864, Díyá'u'lláh, the second son of Bahá'u'lláh through his second wife Fatimih, was born. Initially buried next to his father, Díyá'u'lláh's remains were disinterred in 1965 in a process the UHJ described as a "purification... from past contamination.

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August 15. On this date in 1864, Díyá'u'lláh, the second son of Bahá'u'lláh through his second wife Fatimih (also known as Mahd-i-'Ulya), was born. Initially buried next to his father, Díyá'u'lláh's remains were disinterred in 1965 in a process the UHJ described as a "purification... from past contamination."

Díyá'u'lláh was born on August 15, 1864, in Edirne as the second son of Bahá'u'lláh through his second wife Fatimih (also known as Mahd-i-'Ulya).

Díyá'u'lláh married Thurayyá Samandarí, the daughter of Káẓim-i-Samandar (author of *Tárikh-i-Samandar* and one of the nineteen Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh to whom was addressed the *Lawh-i Fu'ád*) and sister of Ṭarázu'lláh Samandarí (who was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi in 1951).

Becuase they sided with Muhammad 'Alí in his argument with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, both Thurayyá and Díyá'u'lláh were declared Covenant-breakers. After his death in 1898, Díyá'u'lláh had initially been buried next to his father at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at the Mansion of Bahjí. However, having been declared a Covenant-breaker, Díyá'u'lláh's remains were disinterred in 1965 in a process the Universal House of Justice described as a "purification... from past contamination."

Comments

August 16. On this date in 1852, Bahá'u'lláh was arrested and imprisoned. Years later, when he publicly revealed his mission, Bahá'u'lláh would claim that during this incarceration he was visited by the "Maid of Heaven" who told him his mission as the "Manifestation of God."

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August 16. On this date in 1852, one day after a group of Bábís attempted to assassinate Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, Bahá'u'lláh was arrested and imprisoned. Years later, when he publicly revealed his mission, Bahá'u'lláh would claim that during this incarceration he was visited by the "Maid of Heaven" who told him his mission as the "Manifestation of God." Due to pressure from the Russian ambassador, Bahá'u'lláh was not executed but instead exiled to Baghdad along with the other Bábí leadership. Bahá'u'lláh traveled from Iran to Baghdad accompanied with a representative of the Russian legation and an entourage of Russian guards.

From Helen S. Goodall, a Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, and Ella Goodall Cooper's "Daily Lessons Received at Akka: January 1908," "Exile of Bahá'u'lláh"...

When Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in Tihran, the **Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in His behalf**, saying, "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?" The Shah answered that Bahá'u'lláh must be punished because He had ordered the attack on his life (see history). The Ambassador said, "That is not a reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning but was determined to hold Bahá'u'lláh responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping Him in prison.

Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter, and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Bahá'u'lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.

The Ambassador answered, "If, then, you fear Him so much, why keep Him in Tihran? Would it not be better to exile Him to Baghdad?" This was accordingly done, and **an escort furnished of Cossack and Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian horsemen.* *From Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh was sent to Constantinople, then to Adrianople, then to Akka--by force He was sent to the place where He desired to be, thus fulfilling the prophecies of all the Holy Books. He came by His own Will. Had He simply appeared and declared Himself there, the opposers might have said, "Of course, He has read the prophecies and determined to appear in the Holy Land in order to mislead the people." But we see that He used the natural instruments who thought they were sending Him there by force. This is what we may call a real miracle.

After all, did the Shah accomplish his will, or did Bahá'u'lláh accomplish His Will?

From Nabil's *The Dawn-breakers*, "Chapter XXVI Attempt on the Shah's Life, and its Consequences"...

The Russian minister, as soon as he learned of the action which the government contemplated taking, volunteered to take Baha'u'llah under his protection, and invited Him to go to Russia. He refused the offer and chose instead to leave for Iraq. Nine months after His return from Karbila, on the first day of the month of Rabi'u'th-Thani, in the year 1269 A.H., Baha'u'llah, accompanied by the members of His family, among whom were the Most Great Branch and Aqay-i-Kalim, and **escorted by a member of the imperial body-guard and an official representing the Russian legation, set out from Tihran on His journey to Baghdad.**

In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi alludes to the protection the Russian ambassador gave Bahá'u'lláh on different occasions, first after the attempted assassination of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar and again after the decision to exile Bahá'u'lláh from Iran, expressing his "desire to take Bahá'u'lláh under the protection of his government, and offered to extend every facility for His removal to Russia." In his Súriy-i-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh included the *Lawh-i-Malik-i-Rús,* praising Czar Alexander II of Russia in these terms:

when this Wronged One was sore-afflicted in prison, the minister of the highly esteemed government (of Russia)—may God, glorified and exalted be He, assist him!—exerted his utmost endeavor to compass My deliverance. Several times permission for My release was

granted. Some of the ‘ulamás of the city, however, would prevent it. Finally, My freedom was gained through the solicitude and the endeavor of His Excellency the Minister. …His Imperial Majesty, the Most Great Emperor—may God, exalted and glorified be He, assist him!—extended to Me for the sake of God his protection—a protection which has excited the envy and enmity of the foolish ones of the earth.

Comments

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August 16. On this date in 1912, the Portland Oregon Telegram stated "In Portland there are between 200 and 300 followers of Baha'ism."

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ABDUL BAHA, WONDERFUL PERSIAN MYSTIC, EXPECTED TO BE HERE NEXT MONTH

Local followers of Abdul Baha, the Persian mystic and leader of the new Universal religion, are agog over the news that he will in all probability spend a few days in this city during the coming month—an event that has been prayed for and eagerly sought ever since he arrived on American shores months ago.

For several months Abdel Baha has been holding audiences in the East, churches, vast auditoriums and private homes having been thrown open to the Oriental teacher whose personal magnetism and divine message of universal peace and love have won a tremendous following.

From the time he was 9 years old Abdel Baha was incarcerated in a Turkish fortress, and not until the New Turks came into power in 1908 was he released and given the freedom to

Comments

August 16. On this date in 1942, a memorial was held for Abdu'l-Jalil Bey Sa'd in Wilmette, Illinois. He was a prominent member of the Egyptian Baha'i community in its early days, a Hand of the Cause of God, and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and the Sudan.

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 16. On this date in 1942, a memorial was held for Abdu'l-Jalil Bey Sa'd at the Temple in Wilmette, Illinois. He was a prominent member of the Egyptian Baha'i community in its early days, a Hand of the Cause of God, and a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and the Sudan and had died on June 25, 1942.

Abdu'l-Jalil was converted to the Baha'i Faith by Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl, and he devoted himself to service of the Cause in Egypt for the remainder of his life.

He was a judge on the Civil Court of Egypt and in 1923 he wrote several articles arguing that religious freedom should be applied to all religions. The government of Egypt decided to legislate religious freedom for all religions later that year. In 1929 Abdu'l-Jalil met with the Prime Minister of Egypt and attempted to negotiate better conditions for the Egyptian Baha'i community.

In 1934 he refuted attacks on the faith from the Muslim scholar Shaykh el Karashi in a series of articles titled 'The Baha'i Faith is an Everlasting Truth'. In response the Egyptian Minister of Justice was asked to prevent Abdu'l-Jalil from publishing, and he requested that Abdu'l-Jalil stop writing articles in defense of the Faith. Abdu'l-Jalil responded by saying:

"If your excellency wishes me to cease defending my belief, then the other side should also cease attacking it"

This lead to the Egyptian House of Parliament banning both parties from publishing, and Abdu'l-Jalil was exiled to Northern Egypt.

While in Northern Egypt he produced the first translation of *The Dawn-breakers* in Arabic which was published in 1941. All printed copies of the translation were seized by the Muslim authorities of Egypt before they could be distributed. Abdu'l-Jalil garnered support, and managed to not only regain possession of the books, but also permission to distribute them within Egypt and in other countries.

In 1941 he received permission to construct a Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Cairo. He personally oversaw the project, but fell ill and passed away before it was completed.

He passed away on June 25, 1942. After his passing Shoghi Effendi sent the following tele-gram to the Baha'is:

ABDU'L-JALIL BEY SA'D ABU'L-FADL'S MOST RENOWNED DISCIPLE FOREMOST CHAMPI-ON FAITH EGYPT, OUTSTANDING BAHA'I ADMINISTRATOR BRILLIANT AUTHOR, IN-DEFATIGABLE TEACHER ASCENDED ABHA KINGDOM LOSS IRREPARABLE HEARTS GREIF-STRICKEN. ADVISE BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERING TEMPLE TO ASSOCIATE AMERICAN BELIEVERS UNIVERSAL MOURNING DISTINGUISHED HAND CAUSE BAHA'U'LLAH.

A memorial was held at the American Baha'i Temple in Wilmette, Illinois on August 16, 1942.

Comments

August 16. On this date in 1949, an individual whose visit to a Bahá'í Temple had elicited an "emotional reaction produced by disappointment" wrote Shoghi Effendi.

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30 September 1949

To an individual believer

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

Your letter to our beloved Guardian, dated August 16, reached him and he has instructed me to answer it on his behalf.

He was grieved to hear of some of the things you describe. **It shows great spiritual immaturity on the part of some of the Bahá'ís and an astonishing lack of understanding and study of the teachings.** To live up to our Faith's moral teachings is a task far harder than to live up to those noble principles the Moral Re-Armament inculcates, fine and encompassing as they are! Every other word of Bahá'u'lláh's and `Abdu'l-Bahá's writings is a preachment on moral and ethical conduct; all else is the form, the chalice, into which the pure spirit must be poured; without the spirit and the action which must demonstrate it, it is a lifeless form.

He judges, from what you say, that the friends have not or at least many of them have not, been properly taught in the beginning.

There is certainly no objection to stressing the "four standards" of the Moral Re-Armament -- though any teaching of our precious Faith would go much more deeply into these subjects and add more to them.

When we realize that Bahá'u'lláh says adultery retards the progress of the soul in the afterlife -- so grievous is it -- and that drinking destroys the mind, and not to so much as approach it, we see how clear are our teachings on these subjects.

You must not make the great mistake of judging our Faith by one community which obviously needs to study and obey the Bahá'í teachings. Human frailties and peculiarities can be a great test. But the only way, or perhaps I should say the first and best way, to remedy such situations, is to oneself do what is right. One soul can be the cause of the spiritual illumination of a continent. Now that you have seen, and remedied, a great fault in your own life, now that you see more clearly what is lacking in your own community, there is nothing to prevent you from arising and showing such an example, such a love and spirit of service, as to enkindle the hearts of your fellow Bahá'ís.

He urges you to study deeply the teachings, teach others, study with those Bahá'ís who are anxious to do so, the deeper teachings of our Faith, and through example, effort and prayer, bring about a change.

With Bahá'í love,

R. Rabbani

P.S. **He feels your experience at the Temple should be regarded as in part an emotional reaction produced by disappointment and the fact you were still exalted by your happy days at the Moral Re-Armament camp.** No doubt, if you visit the Temple under different circumstances, you will feel there an entirely different atmosphere -- the one you expected to find, and which does exist.

May the Almighty guide, bless and sustain you, remove all obstacles from your path, and enable you to serve, effectively and at all times, the vital interests of His Faith and of its institutions,

Your true brother,

Shoghi

Comments

August 17. On this date in 1855, Percy Woodcock, an early Canadian Bahá'í who served on the Bahá'í Temple Unity (the precursor to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of United States and Canada), was born in Athens, Ontario.

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Percy Woodcock was born in Athens, Ontario to Reverend Eli Woodcock, an Episcopalian minister, and Phoebe Ann Wiltse on August 17, 1855. He was raised as a Methodist.

He studied art at Albert College in Belleville in the 1860's. In 1878 he married Aloysis Pratt, a Canadian from Montreal. In 1881 he moved to Paris where he continued his study of art at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts. He held an exhibition at the Paris Salon in 1883. He then studied under Benjamin Constant, and studied in England and Holland before moving to Brockville, Canada, in 1887. In 1888 he became Principal of Brockville Art School, and served in the position until 1890 when he began travelling across North America and Europe to exhibit his paintings.

In the early 1900's Percy discovered the Bahá'í Faith, likely when he exhibited art in Chicago in 1903, and he associated with Bahá'ís in Chicago and Montreal and attended the Green Acre summer school in Maine. He, his wife Aloysia, and one of their children, May, became Bahá'ís. He taught the Faith after becoming a Bahá'í but incorporated his personal ideas which were not related to the Faith, such as symbolism of the Egyptian pyramids.

In 1908 he temporarily lived in New York, while maintaining a residence in Brockville. In 1909 he reportedly spoke to Moses True, husband of Corinne True, about the Faith and received an informal declaration. He went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1909.In 1910 he spoke on the Faith at Howard University, and in 1911 he and his family attended that years Green Acre Summer School.

Woodcock began to clash with the New York Bahá'í community because he was opposed to organizing the community, and in 1911 he and his family moved to Montreal. He was elected to the Bahá'í Temple Unity in 1911, an administrative body for the North American Bahá'í's which was organizing efforts to construct a Temple in the US, and he was also appointed chair of a publishing commission.

In December 1911 Percy visited Egypt where he met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Ramleh. In 1912 he traveled to Europe with his wife and daughter and met with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Naples, and they traveled with Him and His party on their voyage to the United States on the Cedric.

Percy lived in Montreal for the rest of his life, and died there on February 20, 1936. He had outlived his three children.

Comments

August 17. On this date in 1941, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to two believers stated that the "doctrines of the church today are no longer needed--the Father Himself has come, and thus fulfilled the mission of Christ the Son."

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1647. The Father Himself Has Come and Fulfilled the Mission of Christ the Son

"A Catholic background is an excellent introduction to the Faith, and one that Mrs. ... should feel gratified for having had. Though doctrines of the church today are no longer needed--as the Father Himself has come, and thus fulfilled the mission of Christ the Son--yet the foundation they lay of spiritual discipline, and their emphasis on spiritual values and adherence to moral laws, is very important and very close to our own beliefs."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to two believers, August 17, 1941)

Comments

August 17. On this date in 1969, during her tour of Africa, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum was interviewed on a Kenyan television program called “Today’s Guests” and spoke for seven minutes.

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As documented in Violette Nakhjavani's *The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum*...

On August 5, the wheels of our plane touched down at Entebbe Airport, Kampala, Uganda — at last the long-promised visit of ‘Amatu’l-Bahá to the believers of Africa was commencing. In 1961, at the time when she dedicated the Mother Temple of Africa for public worship, Rúḥíyyih Khánum promised the friends to come back and really visit them, touring as many Centers as possible. After nine years, this has now been fulfilled.

During her ten-day stay in Kampala she was able to attend a reception given in her honor and that of two visiting members of the Universal House of Justice, Hushmand Fatheázam, and my husband, ‘Alí Nakhjavání; to deliver a public lecture in the hall of the National Theater; and to be interviewed for a full half hour on Radio Uganda on the “Guest of the Week” program. Originally the introducer and the interviewer had contemplated ten to fifteen minutes devoted to the Bahá’í guest, but the discussion became so animated, and the two young men and Rúḥíyyih Khánum got so interested in the very diverse questions on the Faith, that after the half hour was over the conversation continued for some time in the studio.

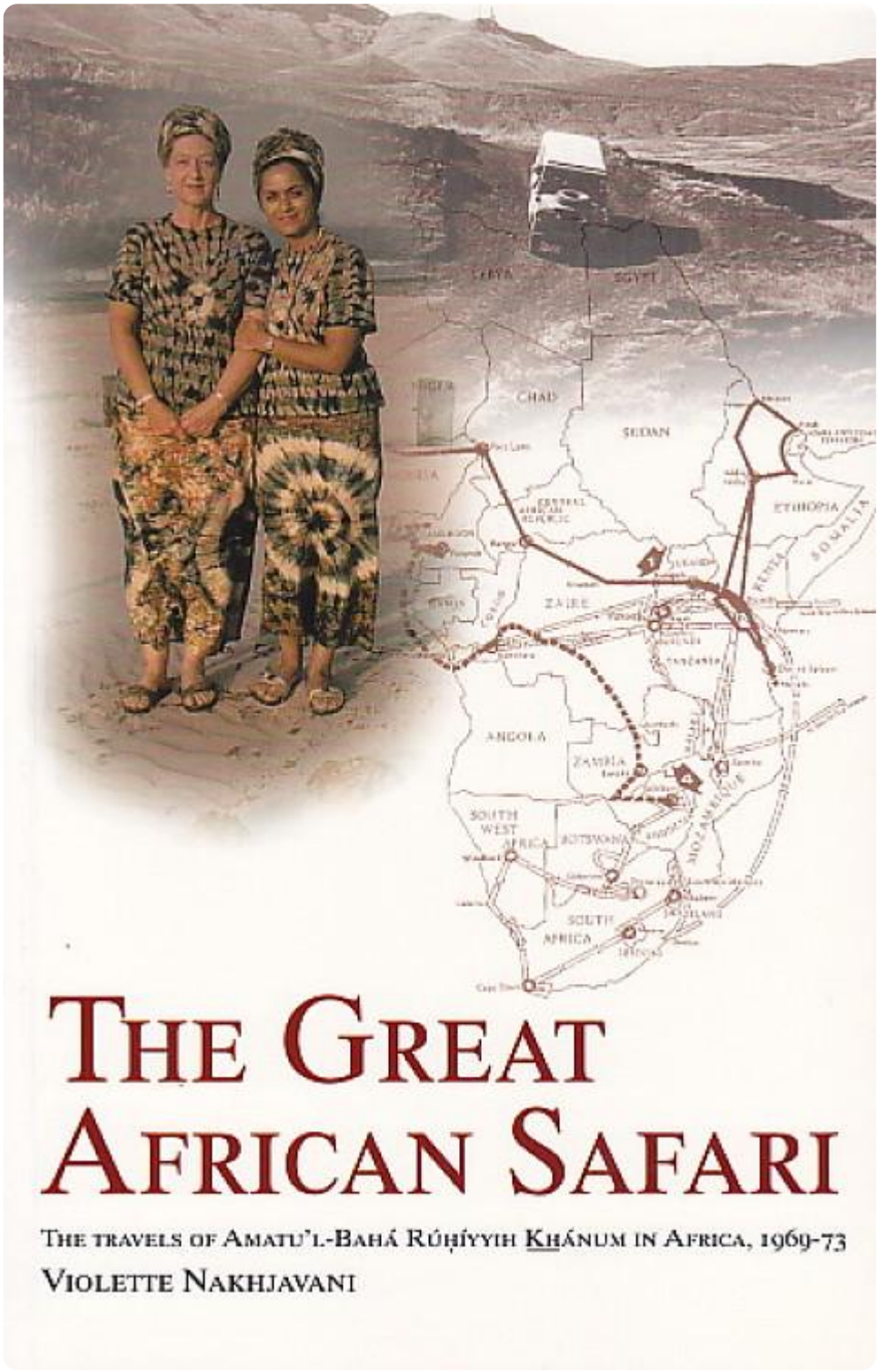
Hands Unite in Prayer

Rúḥíyyih Khánum's happiest moment came when she was able to attend a service in the Mother Temple of Africa, sitting between Hands of the Cause Músá Banání and Enoch Olinga. It is very seldom that Mr. Banání can leave his home these days, but he was able to be present at the marriage of his granddaughter Bahíyyih Nakhjavání to Paul Adams of England; and so three of the Hands could unite in prayer in the heart of the African Continent prior to the very long African safari of 'Amatu'l-Bahá.

Rúḥíyyih Khánum had purchased a large Land Rover — three and a half tons when loaded! — which was awaiting her arrival in Nairobi, Kenya; her plan was to reach the Bahá'ís in the villages, who so seldom have any opportunity to meet their brothers and sisters from other places, how much less other nations and continents; a Land Rover, or similar four-wheeled drive vehicle, is the only method of doing this, as it will go through sand, mud, shrubs, and treacherous wasteland — certainly not comfortably, but it will go.

The plan was to have a few days much needed rest near Mombasa, then visit the coast of Kenya and Tanzania, inland centers of Tanzania, return to Nairobi, visit some areas in Kisii, leave by air for a month to Ethiopia, and then complete the Kenya visit by a ten-day tour of Western Nyanza before proceeding to Kampala.

Although the official Bahá'í reception and public address of 'Amatu'l-Bahá were scheduled to take place towards the end of her Kenya visit, she was nevertheless interviewed on Kenya television on August 17,1969, on a program called "Today's Guests," and spoke for seven minutes. Prior to her departure for Addis Ababa, she was invited to the home of Vice-President Moi and his wife, where in a most cordial and intimate atmosphere, with tea and refreshments, the subject of the Faith and other things of a topical nature were discussed for about an hour.


LIBYA
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KENYA
ZAIRE
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
SOUTH WEST AFRICA
BOTSWANA
SOUTH AFRICA
THE GREAT AFRICAN SAFARI
THE TRAVELS OF AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚḤÍYYIH KHÁNUM IN AFRICA, 1969-73
VIOLETTE NAKHJAVANI

Comments

August 17. On this date in 1993, an individual wrote the UHJ "about the Bahá'í view towards homosexuality...as she is herself in love with another Bahá'í woman, and is perplexed about how to reconcile what seem to her to be natural desires with the laws and principles of the Faith."

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August 17. On this date in 1993, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "a number of questions about the Bahá'í view towards homosexuality. These questions are of immediate and urgent concern to her, as she is herself in love with another Bahá'í woman, and is perplexed about how to reconcile what seem to her to be natural desires with the laws and principles of the Faith."

Homosexuality, Advice on by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1994-05-03 The Research Department has studied carefully the letter of ... dated 17 August 1993 in which she raises a number of questions about the Bahá'í view towards homosexuality. These questions are of immediate and urgent concern to her, as she is herself in love with another Bahá'í woman, and is perplexed about how to reconcile what seem to her to be natural desires with the laws and principles of the Faith. We provide the following response. By way of introduction, it may be useful to recall that the laws and ordinances of this Dispensation Bahá'u'lláh has specifically characterized as "the breath of life unto all created things", as "the mightiest stronghold", as the "fruits" of His "Tree", as "the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples", as "the lamps of His wisdom and loving providence", as "the sweet-smelling savour of his garment", as the "keys" of His "mercy" to His creatures. "This book" (The Kitab-i-Aqdas), He Himself testifies, "is a heaven which we have adorned with the stars of Our command-

ments and prohibitions." (Shoghi Effendi, extracted from God Passes By and published in The Kitab-i-Aqdas: The Most Holy Book [Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1992] pp. 15-16)

As stated in the attached letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice,

"Bahá'ís believe that the love of God is evident in all His laws, no matter how severe some of them may appear to be, because He is revealing to us the purpose and true pattern for which we are created." Regarding ...'s question about the areas of the Guardian's infallibility, we note that the letters written on his behalf on the subject of homosexuality represent his interpretation of the revealed Word on the subject, and are authoritative. They do not, for example, stray into the realm of science, a field in which, as the Guardian himself points out, he is not infallible, by speculating on the possible biological or psychological cause of a predisposition to homosexual tendencies. They do reflect the Guardian's interpretation based on an infallible understanding of the entire Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and form a coherent and consistent whole with the entire body of Bahá'í Sacred Literature and authoritative texts.

We provide two attachments for ...'s consideration. The first is a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of justice to an individual who was investigating the Faith and expressed a concern about the subject of homosexuality. The letter provides a clear summary of the Bahá'í point of view. Regarding the possibility of marriage between two people of the same sex, one of ...'s central questions, the letter quotes the letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi which states, "No matter how devoted and fine the love may be between people of the same sex to let it find expression in sexual acts is wrong." The letter of the House goes on to clarify that

"the basic concept taught by Bahá'u'lláh is that the kind of sexuality purposed by God is the love between a man and a woman, and that its primary (but not its only) purpose is the bringing of children into this world and providing them with a loving and protective environment in which they can be reared to know and love God." Interestingly the letter also states that "The prohibition of sexual intercourse outside the marriage bond does not by any means imply that there cannot be strong bonds of friendship between persons, whether of the same sex or not. On the contrary, affection and friendship are qualities highly praised in the Bahá'í teachings. This whole question of love and friendship is distorted these days because our civilization has exalted sex and sexuality to a level of importance far beyond its proper place in our lives. Sex has also been wrenched out of its proper context. On the one hand our current culture suffuses every aspect of our lives with sex but, on the other, it isolates the sex act from its natural corollaries of marital life and

the bearing and rearing of children." On the question of whether or not there is a biological predisposition to homosexuality, the letter indicates that the question is still open to dispute. In this regard, it may be important to note that while science may find that a predisposition to homosexuality is caused by genetic aberration, and in that sense may be considered "natural", it does not follow that it is "natural" for some people to be homosexual. A comparison can be drawn with the evidence which suggests that there is a genetic flaw which produces a predisposition to alcoholism. Most people would hesitate to conclude from such evidence that a person with such a genetic aberration would be destined to become an alcoholic in spite of any efforts to the contrary. As the letter states, "The statistics which indicate that homosexuality is incurable are undoubtedly distorted by the fact that many of those who overcome the problem never speak about it in public, and others solve their problems without consulting professional counselors." Furthermore, contrary evidence may well exist but may be overlooked by scientific reporting that is, for one reason or another, biased.

Comments

August 18. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote "it is obvious that Joseph Smith is not a Manifestation of God." The Bahá'í notion of progressive revelation exlcudes many key figures who have generated significant religious movements, whether in the distant past like Confucius or ...

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The Bahá'í notion of progressive revelation exlcudes many key figures who have generated significant religious movements, whether in the distant past like Confucius or in the 19th Century like Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Joseph Smith. All religious founders are not universally accepted as prophets.

1727. Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon

"Regarding your question concerning Joseph Smith and the 'Book of Mormon': as the Bahá'í Teachings quite clearly outline the succession of Prophets from the days of Christ as being Muhammad, the Bab, and finally Bahá'u'lláh, it is obvious that Joseph Smith is not a Manifestation of God.

"The Bahá'ís should deal with the members of all religious sects, however, with the greatest tolerance and friendliness, and try to point out to them the significance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh to the world in this great Day. The Guardian would advise you to teach the Mormons like everyone else, the Faith, when you find them receptive. They have

many good principles, and their teachings regarding chastity, not drinking or smoking, etc., are quite similar to ours, and should form a point of common interest."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, August 18, 1941: Bahá'í News, No. 416, November 1965)

Comments

August 18. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi stated "The friends are sometimes surprisingly naive and superficial in their approach to the subject of Covenant-breakers. They do not seem to understand that the descendants of Azal, with their mother's milk, drank hatred of Bahá'u'lláh."

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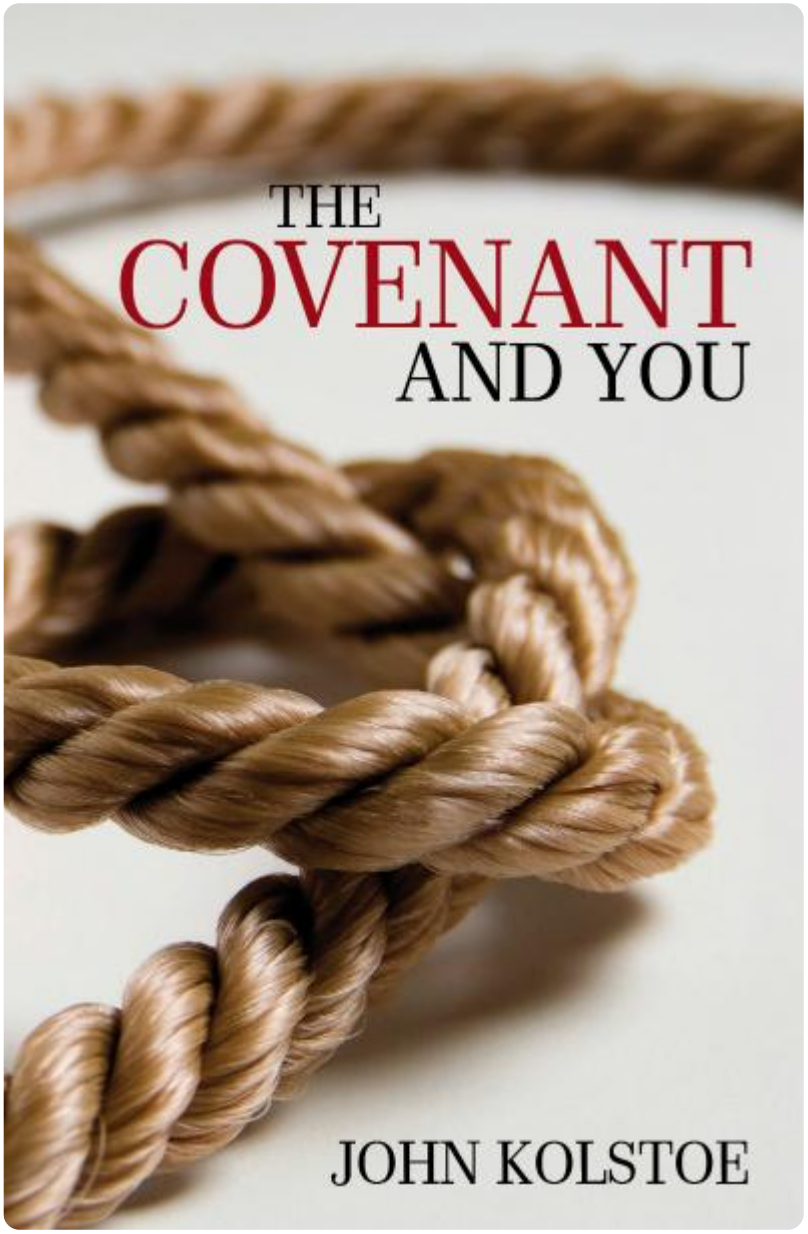
The friends are sometimes surprisingly naive and superficial in their approach to the subject of Covenant-breakers. They do not seem to understand that the descendants of Azal, with their mother's milk, drank hatred of Bahá'u'lláh, just as the descendants of Muhammad-Ali and his relatives have imbibed from babyhood a false concept of the Master. It takes practically a miracle to overcome this lifelong habit of wrong thought. Now, however, he has told the German believers to shun her.

(From a letter dated 18 August 1949 written on behalf of the Guardian to a National Spiritual Assembly)



Comments

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August 18. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Attacks by missionaries, and others, such as that by Elder, should most certainly be vigorously defended publicly by your Assembly and Local Assemblies as well."

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(In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 18 August 1949 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States)

Comments

August 18. On this date in 1949, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter titled "This Hour, Crowded With Destiny," later published in the book "Citadel of Faith" describing Latin America as "so impoverished spiritually, so paralyzed with fear, so confused in thought, so abased in their moral standard."

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August 18, 1949 This Hour, Crowded With Destiny The efforts exerted, and the results achieved, by the members of the American Bahá'í Community during the opening months of the two-year emergency period are such as to merit the highest commendation and praise. **They will, if the effort be sustained, evoke the admiration of the entire Bahá'í world, which is now watching, with feelings of wonder and expectancy, the outcome of the tremendous labor of this community now confronted with one of the most challenging, arduous and far-reaching tasks ever undertaken in its history.**

The great forward stride that has already been undertaken, during so short a period, augurs well for **the ultimate victory, now within sight—a victory which will pave the way for the successful execution of a seven-year enterprise, destined, in its turn, to enable its executors to launch, at the appointed time, the third and most glorious stage in the initial unfoldment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's unique and grand design for that privileged and conspicuously blessed community.**

No less striking has been the achievement of the representatives of this community in the vast and most recent field of their historic and highly meritorious endeavors, exerted beyond the confines of their homeland, where over so vast a territory, **on a continent so agitated, and amidst peoples so disillusioned, so varied in race, language and outlook, so impoverished spiritually, so paralyzed with fear, so confused in thought, so abased in their moral standards, so rent by internal schisms,** victories so rich in promise, so startling in their rapidity, so magnificent in their range, have been won, and ennobled, to such a marked degree, the deathless record of American Bahá'í service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Now that so prodigious and successful an effort has been exerted on behalf of the historic and sacred Temple, whose completion constitutes so vital an objective of the Second Seven Year Plan, and so conspicuous a triumph won in the transatlantic sphere of its operation, its needs and other vital objectives, both at home and in the Latin American field, must receive, in the months immediately ahead, the particular attention of both the national elected representatives of the community who supervise the working of the Plan and the mass of believers who participate in its execution.

While the financial requirements of the Mother Temple of the West are being met with unabated heroism by rich and poor alike in the critical months that lie ahead, and the measures to ensure the undiminished support, and the uninterrupted consolidation of the European enterprise are being assiduously carried out, a parallel effort, no less strenuous and sustained should be simultaneously exerted in the North American continent and in Central and South America, for the purpose of preserving the prizes already won over the length and breadth of the Western Hemisphere, where the initial impulse of this mighty and Divine Plan has been felt and its initial victories in foreign fields registered.

The assemblies of the North American continent, constituting the base for the gigantic operations destined to warm and illuminate, under American Bahá'í auspices, the five continents of the globe, must, at no time and under no circumstances, be allowed to diminish in number or decline in strength and in influence. The movement of pioneers, whether settlers or itinerant teachers, which in fields so distant from this base, has exhibited so marvelous a vitality, must, within the limits of the homeland itself, be neither interrupted nor suffer a decline. The groups and isolated centers so painstakingly formed and established must, conjointly with this highly commendable and essential duty, be maintained, fostered and if possible multiplied.

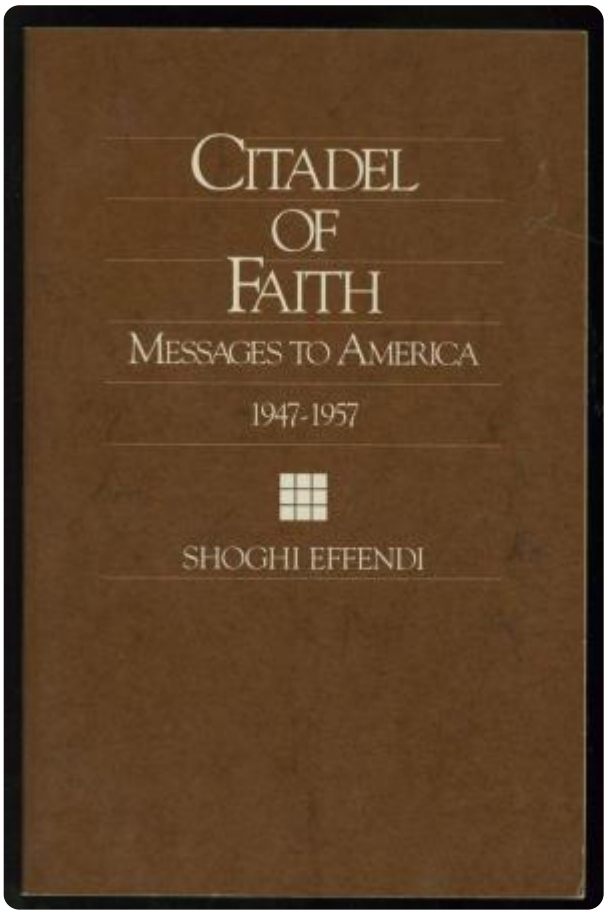
No less attention, while this emergency period taxes, to an unprecedented degree, the combined resources of the envied trustees of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan, should be directed to the vast network of Bahá'í enterprises initiated throughout Latin America, where the work so nobly conceived, so diligently prosecuted, so conspicuously blessed, is rapidly nearing the first stage of its fruition. The flow of pioneers, so vital in all its aspects, and which has yielded such inestimable benefits at the early stages of this widely ramified enterprise, must, however urgent the other tasks already shouldered by an overburdened yet unfailingly protected community, be neither arrested nor slacken. The outpost of the newly born communities, established in the Straits of Magallanes in the South, must be held with undiminished vigor and determination. The major task of ensuring the breadth and solidity of the foundations laid for the establishment of two national Bahá'í assemblies, through the preservation of the present assemblies, groups and isolated centers, and the restoration of any of these vital centers, now dissolved, to their former status, must be scrupulously watched and constantly encouraged. The process of the dissemination of Bahá'í literature, of Bahá'í publication and translation, must continue unabated, however much the sacrifice involved. The newly fledged institutions of teaching and regional committees, of summer schools and of congresses, must be continually encouraged and increasingly supported by teachers as well as administrators, by pioneers, from abroad, as well as by the native believers themselves. The highly salutary and spiritually beneficent experiment of encouraging a more active participation by these newly won supporters of the Faith in Latin America, and a greater assumption of administrative responsibility on their part, in the ever expanding activities to be entrusted wholly to their care in the years to come, should be, in particular, developed, systematized and placed on a sure and unassailable foundation. Above all, the paramount duty of deepening the spiritual life of these newly fledged, these precious and highly esteemed co-workers, and of enlightening their minds regarding the essential verities enshrined in their Faith, its fundamental institutions, its history and genesis—the twin Covenants of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the present Administrative Order, the future World Order, the Laws of the Most Holy Book, **the inseparable institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice,** the salient events of the Heroic and Formative Ages of the Faith, and its relationship with the Dispensations that have preceded it, its attitude toward the social and political organizations by which it is surrounded—must continue to constitute the most vital aspect of the great spiritual Crusade launched by the champions of the Faith from among the peoples of their sister republics in the South.

The magnitude of the tasks these heroes and champions of the Faith are summoned, at this hour, crowded with destiny, to discharge from the borders of Greenland to the south-

ern extremity of Chile in the Western Hemisphere, and from Scandinavia in the north, to the Iberian peninsula in the south of the European continent, is, indeed, breath-taking in its implications and back-breaking in the strain it imposes. The sacrifices they are called upon to voluntarily make for the successful performance of such herculean, such holy, such epoch-making tasks, are comparable to none but those which their spiritual forbears have willingly accepted at the hour of the birth of their Faith more than a hundred years ago. Theirs is the privilege, no less meritorious and perhaps as epoch-making, to preside, in their own homeland and its neighboring continents, over, and direct the forces generated by, the birth of an order that posterity will acclaim as both the offspring of that Faith, and the precursor of the Golden Age in which that same Faith must, in the fullness of time, find its fullest expression and most glorious consummation.

How great the opportunity which the present hour, so dark in the fortunes of mankind and yet so bright in the ever-unfolding history of their Faith, offers them. How unspeakably precious the reward which they who serve it will reap! How pitiful and urgent the need of the waiting multitudes of these continents, summoned to sustain the initial impact of the operation of a divinely impelled Plan which no force can resist and no power can rival!

For what this superbly equipped community, this irresistibly advancing army of the chosen warriors of Bahá'u'lláh, battling under His banner, operating in conformity with the explicit Mandate voiced by His beloved Son, has already achieved, over so extensive a field, in such a brief time, at such great sacrifice, for so precious a Cause, and in the course of such turbulent years, I cannot but feel the deepest sense of gratitude the like of which no achievement, single or collective, rendered in any other part of the globe, by any community associated with the Cause of the Most Great Name has evoked. For what it will and must achieve in the future I entertain feelings of warm expectation and serene confidence. For it, I will continue, from the depths of a loving and grateful heart to supplicate blessings immeasurably richer than any it has yet experienced.


CITADEL
OF
FAITH
MESSAGES TO AMERICA
1947-1957
SHOGHI EFFENDI

Comments

August 18. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice reminded an NSA "participation in anti-apartheid demonstrations and protest activities could be construed as involvement in politics, and therefore should be avoided."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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1805. The Bahá'í Must Scrupulously Avoid Involvement in Political Issues Therefore Cannot Participate in Anti-Apartheid Demonstrations

"In reply to your letter of 15 July 1985 seeking further clarification on the issue of apartheid, the Universal House of Justice has instructed us to point out that as the policy of apartheid derives from racial discrimination, it cannot be accepted by Bahá'ís wherever, and in whatever form, it may be practised.

"While the friends should, of course, support the principles of the Faith, including those advocating the oneness of mankind, and may associate with groups and engage in activities which promote these principles, they must scrupulously take care not to become involved in political issues. As stated in the letter to you dated 16 April 1985, participation in anti-apartheid demonstrations and protest activities could be construed as involvement in politics, and therefore should be avoided.

"...The world around us is seething with unrest caused by the conflicting interests of governments, peoples, races and individuals. Each of these contending parties has some good and some evil on its side, and, whereas we will unhesitatingly uphold Bahá'í prin-

ciples, we will never become embroiled in these internecine conflicts by identifying ourselves with one or other of the parties, however much in our hearts we may sympathize with its aims.

"The positive attitude to the question of racial prejudice is radiant and whole-hearted exemplification of the principle of the oneness of mankind, first among the members of your National Spiritual Assembly and then throughout the Bahá'í community...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, August 18, 1985)

Comments

August 18. On this date in 2007, an article was written about "a Unitarian Universalist minister" who expressed "his feelings of frustration and offense" after having "been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 18. On this date in 2007, an article was written about "a Unitarian Universalist minister" who expressed "his feelings of frustration and offense" after having "been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship."

On January 15, 1950, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States instituted the first celebration of World Religion Day to promote the Bahá'í Faith in an ostensibly interfaith setting. World Religion Day is observed annually on the third Sunday in January.

On October 22, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago stated, "Your letter of September 30, with the suggestion that 'there should be one day in the year in which all of the religions should agree' is a happy thought, and one which persons of good will throughout the world might well hail. However, this is not the underlying concept of **World Religion Day, which is a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself.** Although there have been many ways of expressing the meaning of this celebration in Bahá'í communities in the United States, **the Day was not meant primarily to provide a platform for all religions and their emergent ecumenical ideas.**"

1710. World Religion Day, Purpose of

Your letter of September 30, with the suggestion that 'there should be one day in the year in which all of the religions should agree' is a happy thought, and one which persons of

good will throughout the world might well hail. However, this is not the underlying concept of **World Religion Day, which is a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself.** Although there have been many ways of expressing the meaning of this celebration in Bahá'í communities in the United States, **the Day was not meant primarily to provide a platform for all religions and their emergent ecumenical ideas.** In practice, there is no harm in the Bahá'í communities' inviting the persons of other religions to share their platforms on this Day, **providing the universality of the Bahá'í Faith as the fulfillment of the hopes of mankind for a universal religion are clearly brought forth.**"

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago, October 22, 1968)

On April 11, 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of the U.S. about some of the restrictions on worship in a Bahá'í Temple, including prohibitions on congregational prayer, the presence of images, giving sermons, or the use of instruments.

2061. Worship in Temple

"As regard the whole question of the Temple and services held in it: He wishes to emphasize that he is very anxious, now that this first and greatest Temple of the West has been built, and will, within a few years, be used for worship and regular services by the Bahá'ís, that no forms, no rituals, no set customs be introduced over and above the bare minimum outlined in the teachings. The nature of these gatherings is for prayer, meditation and the reading of writings from the Sacred Scriptures of our Faith and other Faiths; there can be one or a number of readers; any Bahá'í chosen, or even, non-Bahá'í, may read. The gatherings should be simple, dignified, and designed to uplift the soul and educate it through hearing the Creative Word. No speeches may be made, no extraneous matter introduced.

"The use of pulpits is forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh: if, in order to be more clearly heard, the person stands on a low platform, there is no objection, but this should not be incorporated as an architectural feature of the building....

"Vocal music alone may be used and the position of the singers or singer is also a matter for your Assembly to decide; but again, there should be no fixed point, no architectural details marking a special spot. Acoustics should certainly be the main consideration in placing the singers."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, April 11, 1947: Insert with Bahá'í News, No. 232, June 1950)

These prohibitions have often led to confusion and misunderstanding because the Temples are often represented as being "open to all religions," when in fact they are open to members of all religions, but certainly not to all religions.

For example, one Unitarian minister was prevented from reading the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., leading him to "express his feelings of frustration and offense. First he had been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Later he was told that his reading selection was not acceptable and that, as he put it in his letter to the Assembly, he must read from "a world scripture such as the Holy Bible, or Koran, etc., or not at all."

"How would you like," he wrote, "to be asked to participate in a world religion day and then be told that the host required you to read what he defined to be your scriptures, rather than you being able to read from what you felt represented your holy writings?""

You cannot have a Catholic mass, contemporary Christian worship, congregational Muslim salaat, or Hindu puja in the Bahá'í Temple.

The article concerning the Unitarian minister's experience is as follows...

Saturday, August 18, 2007

Unity - As We See It

On January 9, 1985, the Rev. Tom Hansen, **a Unitarian Universalist minister**—I do not use his real name—wrote to the spiritual assembly of the Bahá'ís of Wilmette, Illinois, to **express his feelings of frustration and offense. First he had been invited to read at a World Religion Day service at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Later he was told that his reading selection was not acceptable and that, as he put it in his letter to the Assembly, he must read from "a world scripture such as the Holy Bible, or Koran, etc., or not at all."**

"How would you like," he wrote, "to be asked to participate in a world religion day and then be told that the host required you to read what he defined to be your scriptures, rather than you being able to read from what you felt represented your holy writings?"

The letter is a page-and-a-half of single-spaced type. It is pointed, challenging, and painful.

I wonder if in clinging to decisions of Bahá'í leadership of decades ago you realize that you are denigrating other faiths in holding a world religious [sic] day and then not permitting your guest faiths to designate their readings to be what they call holy scriptures rather than going by your outmoded past? You are denying our beliefs, heritage, and scriptures, in saying, "We Bahá'ís have decided what is scriptural for you. We deny you the right, in our setting, to call scripture what you say is holy. You cannot read what is a true representation of your thinking in our world religious [sic] day. You are limited to what we Bahá'ís, or other authorities of the past century, call holy scripture. If you don't agree that we are right about what is scriptural for you, and read from those books we limit you to, then you are excluded from our service."

The letter passed from the Wilmette spiritual assembly to Bruce Whitmore at the Bahá'í House of Worship. Whitmore contacted Rev. Hansen by phone and sent a follow-up letter of apology with a copy of his own book on the building of the House of Worship as a gift. Whitmore wrote in his letter, "Although it may not be possible for us to change the directives which govern our devotional services, be assured that we will make certain that neither we nor Bahá'í communities planning programs at the House of Worship offend any other religious community, even inadvertently."

Rev. Hansen read the book and delivered a sermon entitled "How the Bahá'ís Built their Temple." Then he wrote back to Mr. Whitmore on February 7. He quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Rúhíyyih Khánum from Mr. Whitmore's book to "suggest that your whole movement reexamine their position about limiting the readings allowed in the main room of the temple." He added his own emphasis to the quotes by underlining words and phrases such as *unity, every, agreement, unfettered, all creeds, Unity of His Prophets, and Unity of Mankind.* **"Are you willing to hear from a Unitarian Universalist prophet," he challenged, "or are we for some reason not included in that unity. And are we a part of the unity of mankind, or not?" He closed the letter with a minor factual correction to Mr. Whitmore's book and thanks for Whitmore's "big spirited attitude."**

I found this correspondence while doing research at the U.S. Bahá'í National archives in Wilmette. It originally interested me because it illustrates, I believe, the dissonance between the public image of the Bahá'í Faith and the more insular, restrictive, and conservative practice of the Faith. The former understandably led Rev. Hansen to believe that "in truth there is no faith in this community closer to yours than the

Unitarian-Universalist religion" (first letter, to Assembly); the latter leads me to think that beneath the surface the two are more opposite than alike.

The dissonance I want to look at now, though, is that between the feeling of accepting all faiths that the doctrine of progressive revelation gives so many Bahá'ís and the meaning which that doctrine has when expressed or acted on in an interfaith context.

In his book *Music, Devotions, and Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* (1987), R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram documents the transformation in American Bahá'í consciousness of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár from a place for Bahá'ís to worship locally, as envisioned originally in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, to its role as "silent teacher." Armstrong-Ingram does not discuss the early American Bahá'ís' understanding of progressive revelation and how it influenced that process. But I suspect it did, because the House of Worship has come to be understood primarily as a physical and public means of relating to non-Bahá'ís religiously—naively so, I would say. In the last chapter of his book, Armstrong-Ingram quotes Hatcher and Martin:

At the present time, the houses of worship are not principally used for Bahá'í community services. Rather, they are opened as places where individuals of all religious backgrounds (or those professing no particular faith) meet in the worship of the one God. Services are nondenominational and consist of readings and prayers from the scriptures of the world's faiths, with no sermons or other attempts to cast these teachings in a mold of a specifically Bahá'í interpretation.

This passage deserves its own essay to unpack its multi-dimensional naiveté and self-deception; I quote it here simply as an example of the disappearance of the doctrinal assumptions underlying devotional practices at the House of Worship behind a claim of non-denominationality.

Progressive revelation is not just a belief in the shared divine origin of the world's religions, which is the aspect of the teaching that is built into the temple. The general scheme of architecture that all Bahá'í houses of worship share—nine doors and nine sides—symbolizes unity. And the Wilmette House of Worship, in particular, sports the symbols of other major world religions cast into its decorative concrete exterior. The doctrine also includes the conception that God communicates episodically with humanity through perfect teachers. Their revelations have become the scriptures which are now the only accepted readings in the auditoriums of Bahá'í houses of worship. There is nothing neutral or nondenominational about this point of view; it is particularly Bahá'í, though some other faiths have related doctrines. How could Rev. Hansen and his rejected twentieth-century

Unitarian writings fit into this scheme? As part of the human corruption and decline of the revelation of Christ and its disintegration into schism?

So we find Mr. Whitmore caught between the directives for worship in the auditorium, which have their roots in this specifically Bahá'í concept of progressive revelation, and the desire to experience fellowship and unity with people of other faiths. How, I wonder, did he think they would avoid offending "any other religious community, even inadvertently"? By not holding interfaith services in the Auditorium? By not inviting Unitarians? Making the rules clear up front might have helped. But the offense seems almost bound to have been repeated in some form, so long as the building continued to be seen by Bahá'ís as a place for all to worship—on Bahá'í terms.

I imagine the Bahá'ís involved were startled by Rev. Hansen's response. But the invitation they had issued was not really one to come together as equals and peers—it couldn't be, because the rules governing the use of the auditorium had, and still have, a specific bias. **It was an invitation to participate in a Bahá'í conception of the oneness of religion. The Bahá'ís involved stumbled into this awkward situation because they believed they were doing one thing when in fact they were doing another.** Progressive revelation is not a bright, universally obvious umbrella under which all religions can happily gather; it is a doctrine of one particular religion. **Bahá'ís need to recognize its limitations as a basis for interfaith relationships.**

Seven years ago I moved away from the vicinity of the House of Worship, so I can't speak for any recent developments, except to praise the presence of Van Gilmer as music director. I do know, though, that **there has been a long history of frustration and dissatisfaction with devotional activity at the House of Worship.** I think that both Bahá'ís and people of other faiths will find more pleasure in worship there when the understanding of the place reverts to that originally intended by Bahá'u'lláh—a place for Bahá'ís to worship, though one with open doors.

Also, judging at least from Armstrong-Ingram's book, a fresh engagement with Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings on the subject might yield a devotional practice more various and engaging than the one which has dominated the House of Worship's history.

It would also be more distinctively Bahá'í than the historical one. I think that would be a good thing.

Comments

[–]Quick_Ad91500 points1 point2 points1 month ago(0 children)

This is disappointing to say the least.

August 19. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi stated "no personal presentation of the Bab, Bahá'u'lláh or the Master, only Their words can be used, but no figure must represent Them; great dignity must be the keynote."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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334. Three Central Figures Cannot Be Portrayed

"...the Faith can certainly be dramatized, but two things must be remembered: no personal presentation of the Bab, Bahá'u'lláh or the Master, only Their words can be used, but no figure must represent Them; great dignity must be the keynote."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, August 19, 1951)

Comments

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submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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The Universal House of Justice 19 August 1982

To the Friends gathered at the Bahá'í International Conference at Lagos

Dearly loved Friends,

With hearts overflowing with love for the people of Africa, so richly endowed with the gifts of the spirit, so abundantly and repeatedly blessed since the dawn of this Revelation, and so gloriously promising in the unfoldment of their hidden potentialities, we welcome the friends gathered at this Conference held in one of the most important capitals of their emergent continent.

As we review the annals of our Faith we see that since the days of the Blessed Beauty and up to the early 1950s, the activities of the friends in Africa had produced the formation of one National Spiritual Assembly with its seat in Cairo, Egypt, the opening of 12 countries to the light of the Faith, and some 50 localities established throughout its vast lands. It was at such a time that the beloved Guardian ushered in the first African Teaching Plan, to be followed during the remaining years of his ministry and in subsequent years after his passing, by a series of challenging and bravely executed plans designed to implant the banner of the Faith throughout the length and breadth of that continent and its neighboring islands. Today, after the lapse of a little over three decades, we stand in awe as **we view with admiration one of the most valiant contingents of the Army of Light,** guided by its own Board of Counselors, led and administered by 37 National Spiritual Assemblies and 4990 Local Spiritual Assemblies, privileged to serve an eager and radiant

community of believers drawn from 1152 [African tribes](reference.bahai.org/en/t/ab/PUP/pup-101.html) residing in 29,000 localities.

How wonderful that it has been possible to convene this Conference on African soil with such a large number of African friends in attendance, in loving memory of the most distinguished heroine of the Bahá'í Dispensation, the eldest daughter of the King of Glory, who lived a long life of sacrificial service to the Cause of her Beloved Father. Her meekness, her unassuming nature, the purity of her soul, the sensitivity of her heart, the calmness of her demeanor, her patience and long-suffering in trials, and above all, her unshakable faith, her tenderness and love, and the spirit of self-renunciation which she evinced throughout her blessed life, are outstanding characteristics that we can well emulate, particularly in Africa, where these heavenly qualities play such an important part in attracting the souls and winning the hearts to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

We rejoice in the knowledge that some communities have already initiated in her name teaching and consolidation campaigns of far-reaching magnitude; that many Bahá'í women, inspired by her example, are accepting an ever-greater share of responsibility in running the affairs of the community; and that numerous newsletters are reflecting eulogies of the station she occupied, the sufferings she endured, and the heroism she demonstrated in her love for the glorious Cause of her Lord.

The fortunes of the Seven Year Plan in Africa are in the balance. As we draw near to the midway point in the unfoldment of the processes it has set in motion, we call upon its valiant promoters on the African mainland and its surrounding islands, to take stock of their position, to reappraise their progress, and to concentrate their resources on whatever portions of the goals are as yet unachieved. **Chief among its objectives are a widespread recruitment of many more supporters of the Most Great Name, the deepening of the individual believers, for the fulfillment of all goals ultimately depends upon them,** and a notable increase in the number of newly formed as well as firmly rooted Local Spiritual Assemblies, to serve as bases for the manifold activities of the community, including the Bahá'í education of children, a greater participation of women and youth in Bahá'í activities, and the formulation of ways and means to enrich the spiritual lives of the "noble" and "purehearted" believers of a "FAST-AWAKENING CONTINENT."

May the participants in this Conference carry to the mass of their devoted fellow believers, whose personal circumstances have made it impossible for them to attend, the spirit of joy

and optimism which we hope will be generated at this gathering and the flames of enthusiasm which we pray will be enkindled in their hearts.

May the memory of the Greatest Holy Leaf, who through her life of heroic self-sacrifice has left to us "a legacy that time can never dim," inspire the friends in every country of the continent to rededicate themselves to the Cause of God, not to allow any opportunity for mentioning the Faith to slip by unutilized, and not to permit one day of their lives to pass without a noble effort to draw nearer to the good pleasure of the Blessed Beauty.

Our fervent prayers surround you as you proceed with your deliberations.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

August 19. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote "While it is customary for the Tablets of Visitation to be recited at the conclusion of the Holy Day programs held at the Bahá'í World Centre, as well as in countries of the Middle East, this practice is not binding upon Bahá'í communities elsewhere."

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19 August 1992

Mr _____

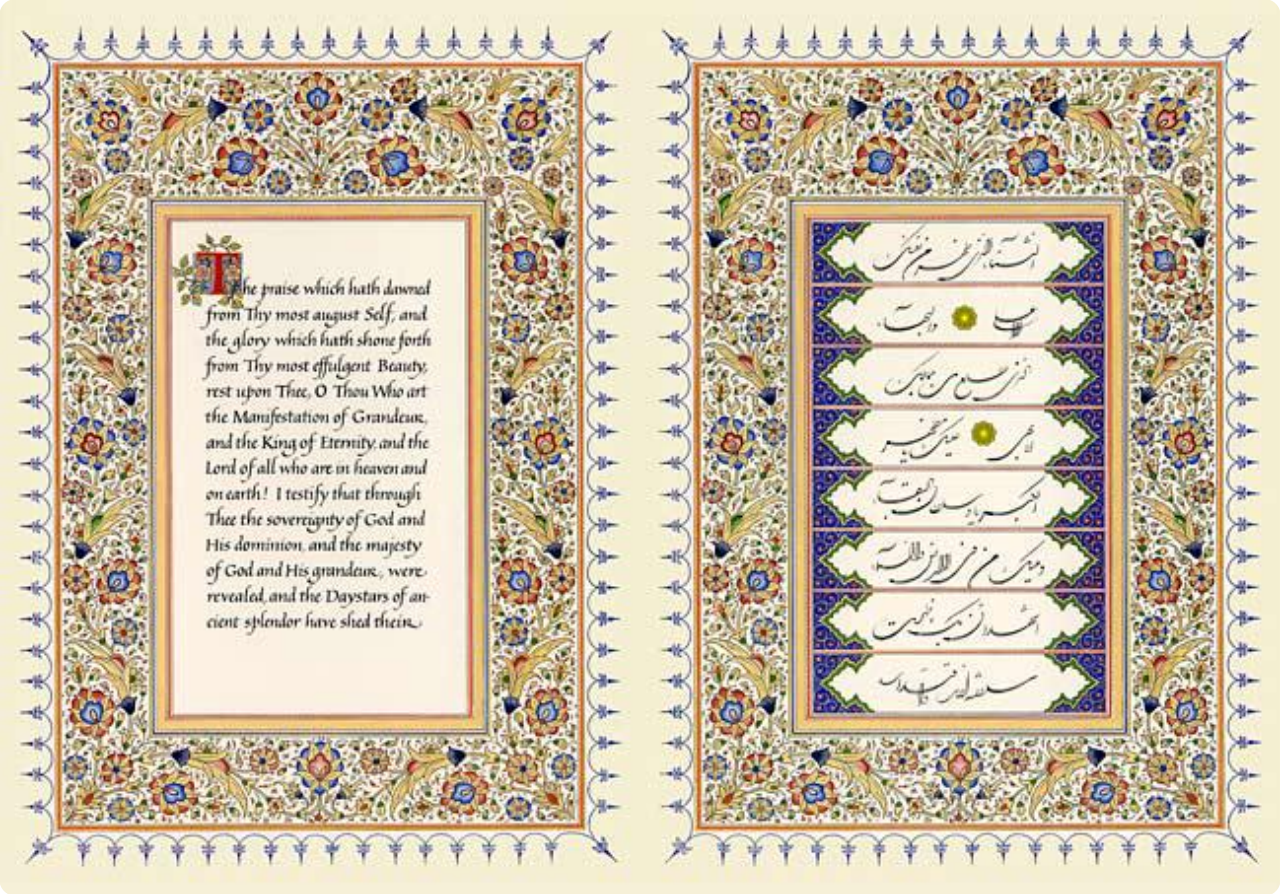
The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 15 June 1992 regarding the conduct of Bahá'í Holy Day observances. We have been asked to provide the following response.

The commemoration of Holy Days, including the development of programs for these observances, is a matter left to the discretion of the appropriate National and Local Spiritual Assemblies, which are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that such observances are conducted in a manner in keeping with the spirit of the divine teachings and ordinances. While it is customary for the Tablets of Visitation to be recited at the conclusion of the Holy Day programs held at the Bahá'í World Centre, as well as in countries of the

Middle East, this practice is not binding upon Bahá'í communities elsewhere, nor has a specific time been fixed for the recitations to occur.

Nothing has been found in the Bahá'í Writings requiring the friends to stand and face the Qiblih whenever the Tablets of Visitation are recited. No issue should be made of this matter when a Holy Day observance is being held. However, when one is actually in, or within the precincts of one of the Holy Shrines, it is an act of simple reverence to stand and face that Shrine when the Tablet of Visitation is recited.

For the Department of the Secretariat


The praise which hath dawned from Thy most august Self, and the glory which hath shone forth from Thy most effulgent Beauty, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art the Manifestation of Grandeur, and the King of Eternity, and the Lord of all who are in heaven and on earth! I testify that through Thee the sovereignty of God and His dominion, and the majesty of God and His grandeur, were revealed, and the Daystars of ancient splendor have shed their

Comments

August 20. On this date in 1909, Hand of the Cause of God and Custodian Paul Haney was born.

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 20. On this date in 1909, Hand of the Cause of God and Custodian Paul Haney was born.

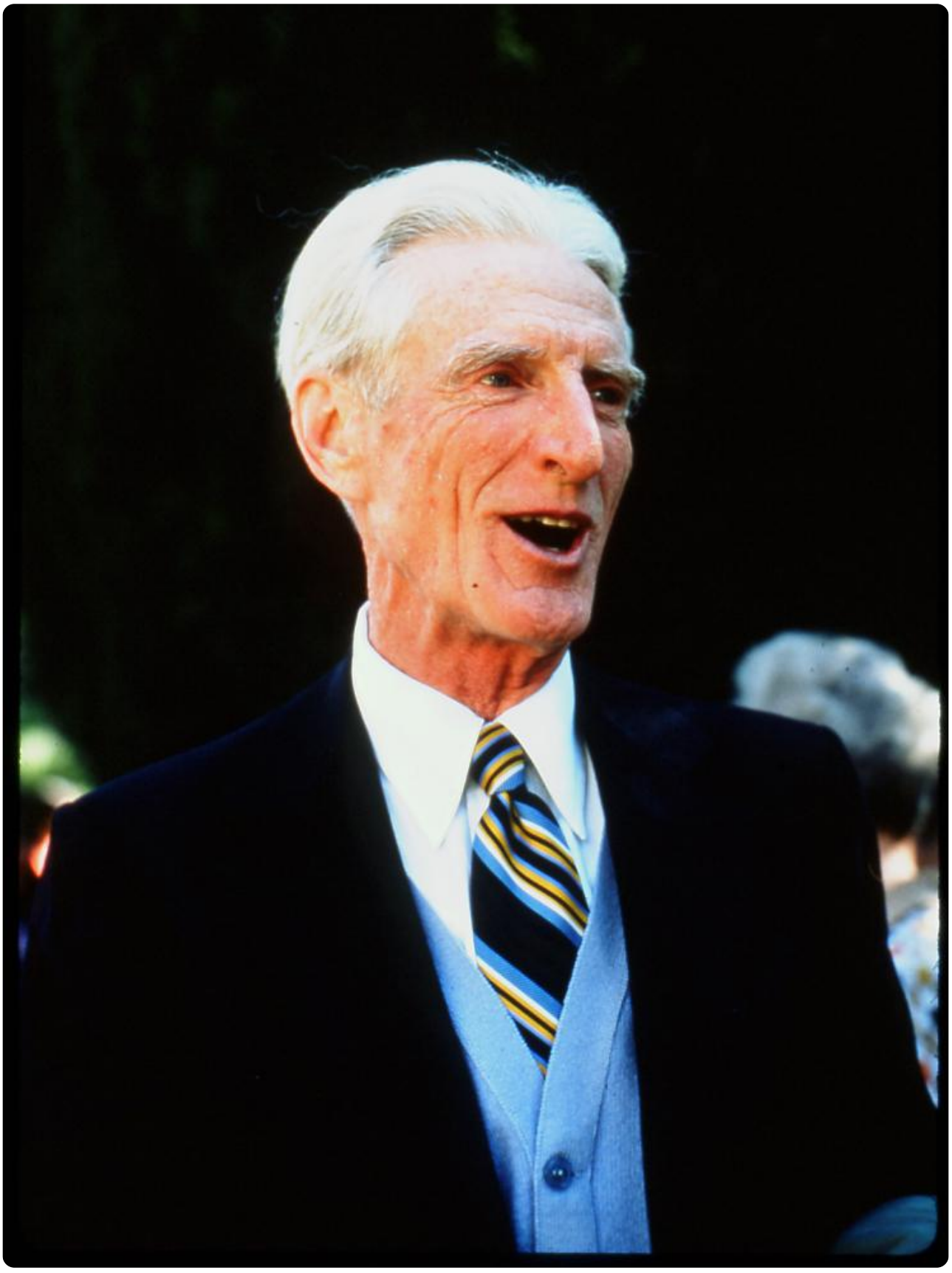
He was born on August 20, 1909 to Bahá'í parents.

In 1946 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada. He represented the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States at the formation of Canada's independent National Spiritual Assembly in 1948.

He was named chairman of the NSA of the United States in 1950 and continued to serve in that capacity until 1957.
After the passing of Shoghi Effendi on November 4, 1957 Paul Haney was elected to be a Custodian of the Holy Land, and he gave up his job in the United States to serve the Faith in this capacity. He lived in the Holy Land, but he also traveled to represent the Hands of the Cause at various national conventions, including the First World Bahá'í Congress in London's Albert Hall in 1963.

When the Universal House of Justice was elected, Paul was one of five Hands of the Cause elected as advisers. He also represented the Bahá'í World Center at diplomatic functions in Jerusalem.

He participated in the founding of the Continental Board of Counselors and the International Teaching Center in 1973 . He attended the four International Conventions that took place during his life, and chaired the opening session of the 1968 Convention. He passed away in Haifa on December 3, 1982 after sustaining injuries in a car accident.



Comments

August 20. On this date in 1915, the Edward Getsinger filed for divorce from his wife Lua Getsinger, "on the ground of adultery with the co-respondents, Clifford H. Stearns and Ameen U Fareed."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 20. On this date in 1915, the *Evening Star* newspaper reported that Edward Getsinger filed for divorce from his wife Lua Getsinger, "on the ground of adultery with the co-respondents, Clifford H. Stearns and Ameen U Fareed."

Lua Getsinger was born on November 1, 1871 to a farm family near the village of Hume in upstate New York.

She became a Bahá'í in Chicago in 1897 after attending lessons taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla about the Bahá'í Faith.

In 1898, Lua Getsinger undertook a Bahá'í pilgrimage to Palestine to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá with other American pilgrims, including Ibrahim George Kheiralla, Phoebe Hearst, and May Boles.

It was during this trip, in Akka, that Kheiralla witnessed firsthand the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers, leading him, upon his return to America in 1899, to form the "Society of Behaists" which would later be led by Shua Ullah Behai and to author a book, *Beha'u'llah*, wherein he states his belief that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was equal in rank to his brothers Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, Díyá'u'lláh, and Badi'u'lláh.

Ultimately, in the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, Kheiralla sided with the latter for which he was declared a Covenant-breaker.

Phoebe Hearst was an early Bahá'í, a wealthy philanthropist, the wife of Senator George Hearst, and the mother of publisher William Randolph Hearst. She later became estranged from the Bahá'í Faith due to being extorted for money by other Bahá'ís.

May Boles would wed William Sutherland Maxwell on May 8, 1902, in London. They met while William was studying architecture in Paris and May was the sister of one of his classmates. The couple were the parents of Mary Sutherland Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi, who was born to them on August 8, 1910. They also hosted 'Abdu'l-Bahá in their Montreal on September 2, 1912.

On June 19, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in New York about Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of the Branch*, declaring himself the "Centre of the Covenant," New York the "City of the Covenant," and Lua Getsinger the "Herald of the Covenant."

Dr. Amínu'lláh Faríd (Ameen U. Fareed) was the son of Mirza Assad Ullah Fareed (who authored *The School of the Prophets*) and the nephew of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wife, Munírih Khánum. He had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interpreter and had been active in promoting the Bahá'í Faith. He had also received a number of Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

On December 16, 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram stating "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith, **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah."

The following Tablet, sent by Abdul-Baha for this Convention was then read by Mrs. Eva Webster Russell:

HE IS GOD!

Through his honour Dr. Fareed,

To the beloved of God in America.

Upon them be BAHA'O'LLAH-el-ABHA!

O ye sons and daughters of the Kingdom!

Praise be to God! The infinite bounty of God hath resuscitated the whole world, and the East and the West have come united with the bond of the summons of God.

Today the call of the Kingdom of God hath reached the hearing of the far and near of all the continents of the world and the standard of the solidarity of Mankind is held aloft by the grasp of Divine Power.

The melody of the East has made joyous and happy the Western world, and the song of the West has penetrated the ears of the Eastern people.

From inception of the world until now there has been no uniting bond between Persia and America, and communication and correspondence never transpired between these two countries. Now consider what a joy and bliss have united these two regions in the shortest space of time! What a real and ideal tie hath bound these together! What spiritual communications have been revealed! And now is only the beginning of this early morn and this is only the result of the twilight preceding the dawn. Soon will the star of this unity shine forth and flood all the horizons with its light and perfect connection and real oneness be obtained in all the regions of the earth. But the speedy realization of these hopes is dependent upon this: That the beloved of God in the West shall arise in unison with perfect strength, girding the loins of endeavor in service and putting forth their greatest effort in the way of unity and love. They must not rest a moment nor take a breath of ease. Nay, rather, night and day must they be striving, working and serving! And with perfect severance, spirituality and the best intent and effort must they hasten to promulgate the Divine Teaching, and above all they must act according to the precepts and exhortations of His Holiness BAHA'O'LLAH, for in this cycle of BAHA'O'LLAH verbal confessions and acknowledgments, literal faith and certainty and external relations are of no avail. Nay, rather, the beloved of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful must manifest such attributes and ethical conduct as to embody and personify the teachings of BAHA'O'LLAH. They must promulgate the law of the Kingdom with deeds and not words. Thus may they become the quintessence of being, the signs of the Kingdom of God, standards of the Supreme Concourse. May ye be salutary water for the thirsty, an evidence of guidance for the seeker, protection and support for the helpless, a shelter and home for the wanderers, the treasury of the Kingdom for the poor; the source of hope and happiness for the disappointed; the remedy of the heart and soul for the ailing. May you manifest the utmost of kindness to the human race; to weep with him who mourneth and to laugh with him who rejoiceth; sympathizing with the helpless; in communion with the wanderer; a friend to the friend and foe.

O ye beloved of Abdul-Baha! The beloved of God and the maid- servants of the Merciful intend to found a Mashrak-el-Azkar in Chicago. They have sent to us numerous plans, that one may be accepted and the edifice be built accordingly. Now the funds must be accumulated, the land entirely paid for and the necessary preparations for building made and then the accessory matters considered. Therefore, make ye an effort and show ye zeal that the price of the land be fully discharged and the means for the edifice procured.

The beloved in the East are striving with heart and soul to contribute to the best of their ability, although the internal conditions of Persia have, during the last few years, been exceedingly disturbed. This revolution affected all conditions and walks of life. There has been no agriculture, no trade and no commerce; nay, rather, in all the provinces there have been political disputes and quarrels between the two parties, namely, the nationalists and the constitutionalists. Thus, they have been wholly occupied with their own affairs. Notwithstanding this, they have striven to contribute to the Mashrak-el-Azkar in Chicago according to their best ability, and they will never be found wanting! If Persia should obtain order, the beloved there will make a worthy contribution.

And I supplicate the Kingdom of God to aid and confirm you.

Upon ye be BAHA'O'LLAH-el-ABHA!

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

(Translated by Dr. Ameen U, Fareed, March 18, 1910.)

On December 16, 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram stating "Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith, **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah."

Fast-Dwindling Band of Covenant-Breakers

Following the successive blows which fell with dramatic swiftness two years ago upon the ring-leaders of the fast dwindling band of old Covenant-breakers at the World Center of the Faith, **God's avenging hand** struck down in the last two months, Avarih, Fareed and Falah, within the cradle of the Faith, North America and Turkey, who demonstrated varying degrees, in the course of over thirty years, of faithlessness to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

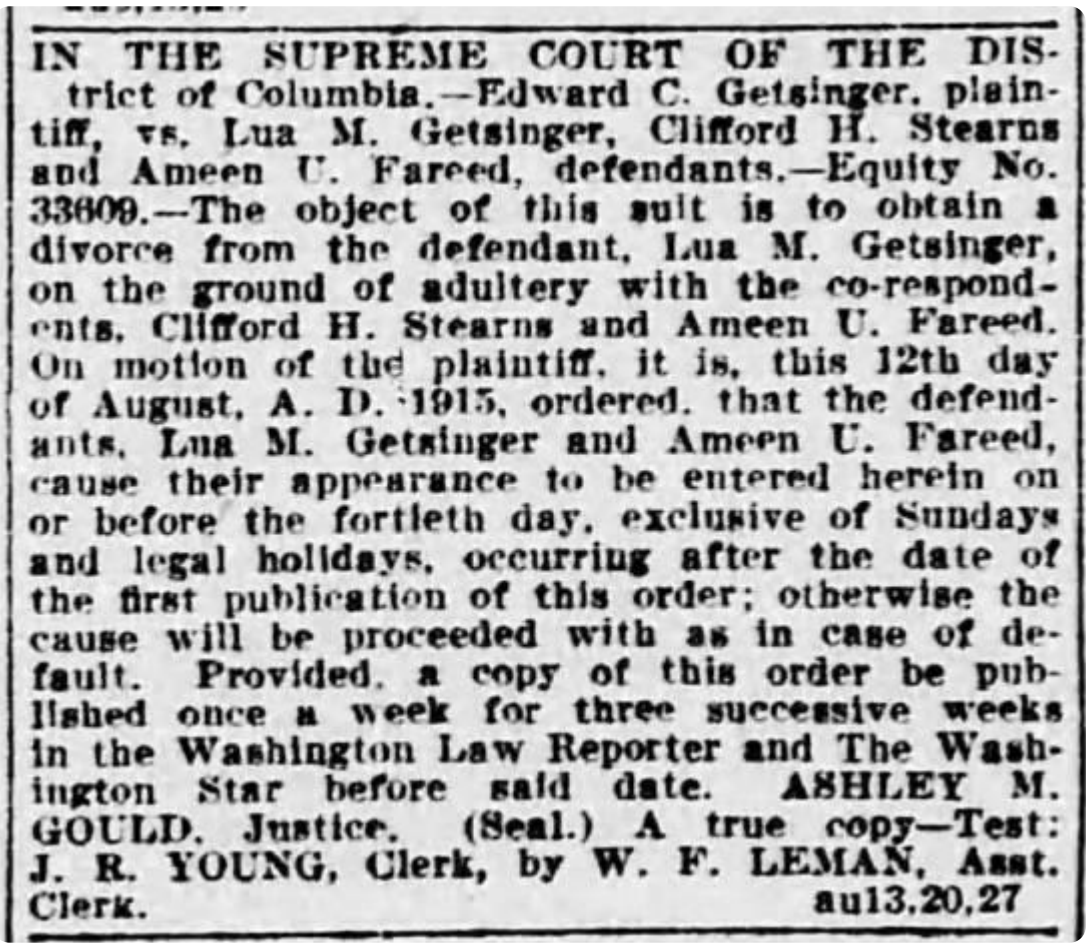
The first of the above named will be condemned by posterity as being **the most shameless, vicious, relentless apostate** in the annals of the Faith, who, through ceaseless vitriolic attacks in recorded voluminous writings and close alliance with its traditional enemies, assiduously schemed to blacken its name and subvert the foundations of its institutions.

The second, history will recognize as one of the **most perfidious among the kinsmen** of the interpreters of the Center of the Covenant, who, **driven by ungovernable cupidity**,

committed acts causing agonies of grief and distress to the beloved Master and culminating in open association with breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant in the Holy Land.

The third will be chiefly remembered by the **pride, obstinacy and insatiable ambition** impelling him to violate the spiritual and administrative precepts of the Faith.

All three, however **blinded by perversity**, could not have failed to perceive, as their infamous careers approached their end, the futility of their opposition and measure their own loss by the degree of progress and consolidation of the triumphant administrative order so magnificently celebrated in the course of the festivities of the recently concluded Holy Year.



IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE DISTRICT of Columbia.—Edward C. Getsinger, plaintiff, vs. Lua M. Getsinger, Clifford H. Stearns and Ameen U. Fareed, defendants.—Equity No. 33609.—The object of this suit is to obtain a divorce from the defendant, Lua M. Getsinger, on the ground of adultery with the co-respondents, Clifford H. Stearns and Ameen U. Fareed. On motion of the plaintiff, it is, this 12th day of August, A. D. 1915, ordered, that the defendants, Lua M. Getsinger and Ameen U. Fareed, cause their appearance to be entered herein on or before the fortieth day, exclusive of Sundays and legal holidays, occurring after the date of the first publication of this order; otherwise the cause will be proceeded with as in case of default. Provided, a copy of this order be published once a week for three successive weeks in the Washington Law Reporter and The Washington Star before said date. ASHLEY M. GOULD, Justice. (Seal.) A true copy—Test: J. R. YOUNG, Clerk, by W. F. LEMAN, Asst. Clerk.
au13,20,27

Comments

August 20. On this date in 1930, Jean-Baptiste Louis Bourgeois died. He was a Canadian architect and designer of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois.

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August 20. On this date in 1930, Jean-Baptiste Louis Bourgeois died. He was a Canadian architect and designer of the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois.

Louis Bourgeois, in his youth, worked as a clerk in a church contractor's office Trois-Rivières, Quebec, and through this experience planned the construction of the Church of Saint-Wenceslas in 1892. He then married Marie Gronville, who died young after having three children. His wife's medical bills caused him to go into debt, and thus he moved to Montreal to work as an apprentice sculptor in Napoléon Bourassa's business. Mr. Bourassa sent Louis Bourgeois to Paris, France to study, but during his time in Paris, Mr. Bougeois left his studies and traveled to other countries including Italy, Greece, Egypt and Iran.

He returned to North America in 1886, moving to Chicago, where he worked with Louis Sullivan. He then moved to California where he taught French to painter Paul de Longpré's daughters. He would then marry one of de Longpré daughters, Alice.

In the winter of 1906 to 1907, while he was in New York City, Louis Bourgeois became a Bahá'í after he learned about the teaching on the unity of religions. He then moved to Teaneck, New Jersey to expand the Bahá'í community there.

In 1920 Louis Bourgeois' design for the House of Worship in the United States was chosen by the delegates to the National Convention. During the next decade he spent much time constructing and financing the structure, despite bouts of ill health.

He died on August 20, 1930, at the age of 74, after a month of bad health.

The Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois was opened in 1953.

Comments

August 20. On this date in 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "The Guardian's infallibility covers interpretation of the revealed word and its application" and that "He is assured the guidance of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 20. On this date in 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "The Guardian's infallibility covers interpretation of the revealed word and its application" and that "He is assured the guidance of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab."

1055. The Guardian is Assured the Guidance of Both Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab

"Instructions sent on behalf of the Guardian are binding, as are the words of the Guardian; although of course, they are not the Guardian's words.

"The Guardian's infallibility covers interpretation of the revealed word and its application. Likewise any instructions he may issue having to do with the protection of the Faith, or its well-being must be closely obeyed, as he is infallible in the protection of the Faith. He is assured the guidance of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab, as the Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá clearly reveals."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, August 20, 1956)

Comments

August 21. On this date in 1868, as part of the exile from Edirne to Acre, "Baha'u'llah and His companions were taken on board an Austrian-Lloyd steamer bound for the Holy Land. The ship touched first at Modelli and Smyrna. At Alexandria, Baha'u'llah was transferred to another ship which ...."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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As document in Chapter 10 of William Sears' book *The Prisoner and the Kings*, titled *Akka*...

On August 21, 1868, Baha'u'llah and His companions were taken on board an Austrian-Lloyd steamer bound for the Holy Land. The ship touched first at Modelli and Smyrna. At Alexandria, Baha'u'llah was transferred to another ship which stopped at Port Said and Jaffa.

On August 31, the vessel arrived at the port of Haifa. It anchored at sea below the foot of Mount Carmel, the "nest of the Prophets" and the "vinyard of God."

The Glory of God had come home at last!

Comments

August 21. On this date in 1912, an entry in Mahmud's Diary recounts an encounter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with "a young girl" ..."'I am a good Jewess.' The Master then said: 'A good Jew can also become a Bahá'í. The truth of the religion of Moses and of Bahá'u'lláh is one.'"

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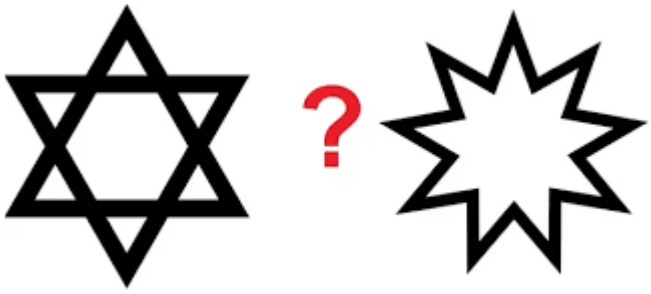
August 21. On this date in 1912, an entry in Mahmud's Diary recounts an encounter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with "a young girl:" 'I have come to ask for your assistance. Please tell me what I am fitted to do so that I may occupy myself with it.' The Master asked, 'Do you have trust in me?' She replied, 'Yes.' He then said to her, 'Be a perfect Bahá'í. Associate with Bahá'ís. Study the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Then you will be assisted in whatever you undertake to do.' She then said, 'I am a good Jewess.' The Master then said: 'A good Jew can also become a Bahá'í. The truth of the religion of Moses and of Bahá'u'lláh is one. Turn toward Bahá'u'lláh and you will acquire peace and tranquillity, you will hear the melody of the Kingdom, you will stir people's souls and you will attain the highest degree of perfection. Be assured of this.' When she heard the Master's words she was so impressed that she threw herself at His feet and wept.

During the visit of a group of Bahá'ís with the Master, a young girl came in and said, 'I have come to ask for your assistance. Please tell me what I am fitted to do so that I may occupy myself with it.' The Master asked, 'Do you have trust in me?' She replied, 'Yes.' He then said to her, 'Be a perfect Bahá'í. Associate with Bahá'ís. Study the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Then you will be assisted in whatever you undertake to do.' She then said, 'I am a good Jewess.' The Master then said:

A good Jew can also become a Bahá'í. The truth of the religion of Moses and of Bahá'u'lláh is one. Turn toward Bahá'u'lláh and you will acquire peace and tranquillity, you will hear

the melody of the Kingdom, you will stir people's souls and you will attain the highest degree of perfection. Be assured of this.

When she heard the Master's words she was so impressed that she threw herself at His feet and wept.



Comments

August 21. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of the U.S. and Canada "We read in The Times that Queen Marie of Rumania is coming to America. She seems to have obtained a great interest in the Cause. So we must be on our guard lest we do an act which may prejudice her and ...."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 21. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of the U.S. and Canada "We read in The Times that Queen Marie of Rumania is coming to America. She seems to have obtained a great interest in the Cause. So we must be on our guard lest we do an act which may prejudice her and set her back. Shoghi Effendi desires, that in case she takes this trip, the friends will behave with great reserve and wisdom, and that no initiative be taken on the part of the friends except after consulting the National Assembly." Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter, Princess Ileana of Romania, disputes this claim.

From Chapter 4 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, titled "Martha Root and Queen Marie of Rumania"...

Martha Root reported to Shoghi Effendi the account of the first of her eight interviews with Queen Marie of Rumania, which took place on January 30, 1926, in Controceni Palace in Bucharest, at the request of the Queen herself, after she had received Dr. Esslemont's book, Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, sent to her by Martha. The Queen had evidently been attracted to the Teachings and when it was bruited about that she might visit North America, Shoghi Effendi wrote to the American National Spiritual Assembly the following

instructions, conveyed in the writing of his secretary, on August 21, 1926: "We read in The Times that Queen Marie of Rumania is coming to America. She seems to have obtained a great interest in the Cause. So we must be on our guard lest we do an act which may prejudice her and set her back. Shoghi Effendi desires, that in case she takes this trip, the friends will behave with great reserve and wisdom, and that no initiative be taken on the part of the friends except after consulting the National Assembly."

Comments

Original Index: 22 | Current Position: 64

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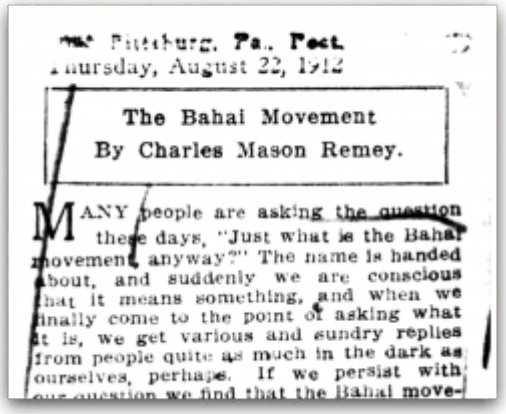

Pittsburg, Pa., Post.
Thursday, August 22, 1912

The Bahai Movement
By Charles Mason Remey.

MANY people are asking the question these days, "Just what is the Bahai movement, anyway?" The name is handed about, and suddenly we are conscious that it means something, and when we finally come to the point of asking what it is, we get various and sundry replies from people quite as much in the dark as ourselves, perhaps. If we persist with our question we find that the Bahai move-

Comments

August 22. On this date in 1977, the UHJ wrote "It is not for individual believers to limit the sphere of the Guardian's authority, or to judge when they have to obey the Guardian and when they are free to reject his judgement. Such an attitude would evidently lead to confusion and to schism."

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August 22. On this date in 1977, a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer stated that "It is not for individual believers to limit the sphere of the Guardian's authority, or to judge when they have to obey the Guardian and when they are free to reject his judgement. Such an attitude would evidently lead to confusion and to schism. The Guardian being the appointed interpreter of the Teachings, it is his responsibility to state what matters which, affecting the interests of the Faith, demand on the part of the believers complete and unqualified obedience to his instructions."

1050. Infallibility of the Guardian is Not for Individual Believers to Limit or to Judge

"Shoghi Effendi was asked several times during his ministry to define the sphere of his operation and his infallibility. The replies he gave and which were written on his behalf are most illuminating. He explains that he is not an infallible authority on subjects such as economics and science, nor does he go into technical matters since his infallibility is confined to 'matters which are related strictly to the Cause'. He further points out that 'he is not, like the Prophet, omniscient at will', that his 'infallibility covers interpretation of the revealed word and its application', and that he is also 'infallible in the protection of the Faith'. Furthermore, in one of the letters, the following guideline is set forth: **'...It is not for individual believers to limit the sphere of the Guardian's authority, or to judge when**

they have to obey the Guardian and when they are free to reject his judgement. Such an attitude would evidently lead to confusion and to schism. The Guardian being the appointed interpreter of the Teachings, it is his responsibility to state what matters which, affecting the interests of the Faith, demand on the part of the believers complete and unqualified obedience to his instructions.'"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, August 22, 1977)

Comments

August 22. On this date in 1983, the UHJ wrote "In these days Bahá'ís can expect the flame of fanaticism to be kindled among the enemies of the Faith in Muslim countries. In meeting attacks the friends should learn to combine the spirit of steadfastness and courage with love and wisdom."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 22. On this date in 1983, the Universal House of Justice wrote "In these days Bahá'ís can expect the flame of fanaticism to be kindled among the enemies of the Faith in Muslim countries. In meeting attacks the friends should learn to combine the spirit of steadfastness and courage with love and wisdom. They should avoid argument and conflict and conduct themselves in such manner that they do not provoke retaliation. This includes the use of discretion in their teaching activities."

38 . ...In these days Bahá'ís can expect the flame of fanaticism to be kindled among the enemies of the Faith in Muslim countries. In meeting attacks the friends should learn to combine the spirit of steadfastness and courage with love and wisdom. They should avoid argument and conflict and conduct themselves in such manner that they do not provoke retaliation. This includes the use of discretion in their teaching activities.

(In a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, 22 August 1983 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Bangladesh)

Comments

August 22. On this date in 2005, the NSA of the U.S. wrote "We hope that Kalimat Press is exercising appropriate care in the nature of the material it propagates and is mindful of the need, especially during this critical period in the Faith's development, of safeguarding the high station and ..."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 22. On this date in 2005, the NSA of the U.S. wrote Kalimat Press about its intention "to distribute a reprint of Abbas Amanat's Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement 1844-1850, with the addition of a new preface in which — according to your description — Mr. Amanat comments on developments in the field of Babi-Bahá'í studies since the original publication of the book in 1989" noting "Word has reached us from independent sources that Mr. Amanat's preface is severely critical of institutions of the Faith....We hope that Kalimat Press is exercising appropriate care in the nature of the material it propagates and is mindful of the need, especially during this critical period in the Faith's development, of safeguarding the high station and dignity of institutions that derive their being from the wellsprings of Bahá'u'lláh's mighty revelation.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

August 22, 2005

Dear Bahá'í Friend:

The National Spiritual Assembly noted in your July 13 email message conveying news of your forthcoming publications that you intend soon to distribute a reprint of Abbas Amanat's Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement 1844-1850, with the addition of a new preface in which — according to your description — Mr. Amanat com-

ments on developments in the field of Babi-Bahá'í studies since the original publication of the book in 1989.

Word has reached us from independent sources that Mr. Amanat's preface is severely critical of institutions of the Faith. Not having seen it, we have drawn no conclusions about the preface and are obviously not in a position to comment on it. We hope that Kalimat Press is exercising appropriate care in the nature of the material it propagates and is mindful of the need, especially during this critical period in the Faith's development, of safeguarding the high station and dignity of institutions that derive their being from the wellsprings of Bahá'u'lláh's mighty revelation.

We look forward to your reply.

With loving Bahá'í regards,

[National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States]

Comments

August 23. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi sent a warning to American Bahá'ís about Joseph Perdu's travels to Hawaii and the United States mainland.

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 23. On this date in 1950, Shoghi Effendi sent a warning to American Bahá'ís about Joseph Perdu's travels to Hawaii and the United States mainland.

Joseph Perdu was a Bahá'í who was active in Australia, having arrived from India in 1948 and earning the praise of Shoghi Effendi for his "enthusiastic support". Perdu's explanations of the Islamic teachings concerning the "day of resurrection" and the "seal of the prophets" from a Bahá'í perspective were instrumental in converting Fazel "Frank" Khan and his family. He and his family were the first Muslims in Australia to convert to the Bahá'í Faith, doing so in 1948. Frank Khan would serve on the NSA of Australia, as would his children Joy Vohradsky and Peter Khan, who also served on the International Teaching Centre and Universal House of Justice.

In July of 1950 Joseph Perdu visited Fiji, and converted some Islamic (Ahmadi) Indian Fijians.

Joseph Perdu attracted many people to the Bahá'í Faith in Australia as well as Fiji, until his habit of borrowing money from his listeners and failing to repay them became intolerable.

Messages to Australian Bahá'ís about Joseph Perdu include those dated November 23, 1949; June 28, 1950; March 1, 1951; and June 3, 1952.

A warning was sent to American Bahá'ís on August 23, 1950 about Perdu's travels to Hawaii and the United States mainland. A warning was sent to British Bahá'ís on September 6, 1950, about Perdu's having met Ahmad Sohrab.

In the 1950's, Joseph Perdu became resident in South Africa. From Shamil Jeppie's *Language, Identity, Modernity: The Arabic Study Circle of Durban*...

Perhaps the most controversial of these was Joseph Perdu, already resident in South Africa, and active in Cape Town. Invited to Durban in 1954, "Monsieur" Perdu proved to be a persuasive and charismatic speaker, a challenging gadfly, well-versed in the Koran and *hadith*, drawing large numbers to his talks. He later offered tafsir classes. But, the unorthodoxy of his views soon drew opponents and he was attacked in pamphlets. His critics were indeed justified, inasmuch he was an undercover Baha'i missionary. With the exception of a few of Perdu's converts in Cape Town, the Baha'i religion was unknown in South Africa and the true nature of Perdu's beliefs were not readily recognized, even by his critics. Suspicions were verified by Mall, who visited Baha'i headquarters in Bombay where he learned the identity of Perdu, who was an Iranian and who had already proselytized in several other countries. The Circle then quietly distanced itself from Perdu, but this episode tainted the group for decades with its critics. Perdu left South Africa in 1959, having been excommunicated by his hierarchy. Jeppie has also published a separate article in the *Journal of Islamic Studies* on this influential figure. (Shamil Jeppie, "Identity Politics and Public Disputation: A Baha'i Missionary as a Muslim Modernist in South Africa," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 27 (2007): 150-172.)

In South Africa, Joseph Perdu employed an indirect teaching method, giving lecture on Islam to Muslims and only overtly introducing those he felt were prepared to the Bahá'í message.

From the book *Heroes and Heroines of the Ten-year Crusade* by Lowell Johnson, pages 283-86...

Majiet (Michael) and Asa Noor

Majiet and Asa Noor enrolled as Baha'is in Cape Town on 3 September 1961. Both of them had attended Joseph Perdu's lectures on Islam along with the Davids and Gallow families. But they, like the Davids, had not been singled out by Perdu to receive the direct Baha'i Message because Perdu felt that they were still too attached to the Qur'an and Islam. However, when the Gallows enrolled they, along with the Davids, the Tarin and Bayat families, began to re-examine Islam in the light of Baha'u'llah's teachings. Majiet and Asa were the first to declare, followed within a few days by the Davids, theTarins and the Bayats.

Majiet explains in detail how the Faith was spread after the declarations of the Gallow family and his role in it: 'I heard about a lecture at the Avalon Bioscope, Hanover St., Cape Town. It was a very rainy day and I did not feel like going but opposite my house was a bus stop, and I stood on my stoep debating to myself. Along came a bus and I jumped in. It

made up my mind for me. I thoroughly enjoyed the lecture on "Koran and Science" given by Joseph Perdu (whom I later was to find was a Covenant-breaker). He delivered a series of lectures and I attended them all. I was much impressed by this new learning; it gave me great thought as it threw so much light on religion itself. 'This same man, Perdu, afterwards, held classes for about a dozen of us. In these he pointed directly to a new revelation and a new manifestation. The matter was so clear that we accepted the the idea but I thought this can only happen in a hundred years' time.

In those classes he never mentioned Baha'u'llah or the Baha'i Faith.

'One morning in late June 1961 I woke up and said my morning prayer. It was a beautiful winter's day. I read one of the chapters out of the Koran that Perdu spoke about. I sat and pondered over these verses and wished I knew the inner meaning. On my way to work I met Toyar Gallow. He asked me if I was still searching for Truth as he remembered that I attended classes with him. I was asking myself when all this was to take place. He laughed and told me to visit him at his workshop [at the Michaelis School of Art] as I worked close to him.

'Somehow I never made it, but Toyar came to visit me two days later. Funny enough, he asked me if it was possible for a new prophet to come. When I told him it was possible, he laughed and said two prophets had already made their appearance. He started to explain the verse I had read that particular morning, a wonderful feeling enveloped me and I knew that this was what I was seeking. He made me promise not to tell anyone what he had told me.

'Afterwards, Toyar took me to his brother Amien's place [in Surrey Estate] where I learned more about the Baha'i Faith and they told me they were declared Baha'is. I made enquiries about a photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha that was displayed on a table and was told this was the "Mystery of God". I wasn't very happy with this reply as I was not used to seeing pictures of Holy Souls. When I left, Amien gave me the Dawn-Breakers to read.

'All this that I had read and heard, worried and fascinated me and I felt I must speak to others about it although I was warned not to. I met Gabeba Davids at Cassiem's house in Horstley St. I told her there was much more to the lectures we attended [together] and that there's a new spirit in the world. She did not actually know what I was speaking about but agreed there was a new feeling. 'Toyar promised to take me to a meeting. He picked me up at my house in Stegman Rd, Claremont, and took me to Tommy Heuvel's house in Maitland. Lowell and Edith Johnson were also there. I was impressed by the happy fellow-

ship that prevailed. I was hoping to attend all the meetings they had. After the meeting Lowell took me home as he was staying quite near.

'That Sunday morning Amien came to see me to find out how far I was with the Dawn-Breakers. I told him this book was quite heavy reading and I was not used to reading this kind of literature. I walked with him to his car. As he started to leave, my wife and Naomi Rasiet returned from Arabic classes. I told them had some Great News, so we set a date to bring them to his house.

'The three of us [plus Gabeba] visited his house one Sunday and had a class together. We all learned a lot. As we read The Hidden Words I knew that this was nothing but the Truth. That night before we left, Amien showed us an album of photographs of Baha'u'llah's bed, His slippers, the Prison in which He was held, etc. This seemed to have stunned all of us. As we looked at each other we saw the expressions on each other's face that it could not be right as our Muslim belief did not go with such things. However, when we left, Amien gave Gabeba and Naomi each a book. He gave me the Kitab-i-Iqan to read.

'In the meantime I had ordered some books from the C.N.A. [Central News Agency] and the very next day I received three books, one was Baha'u'llah and the New Era. That night I started reading the Kitab-i-Iqan. I could not stop reading it and found myself still reading when the sun came up.

'During the time that Lowell took me to meetings I met Leon Tarin and took him home with me. I asked him if he believed a new prophet could come. He said "perhaps", as he also had attended Perdu's lectures. When I told him that a new prophet had already come, he said I was mad.The next day I gave him Baha'u'llah and the New Era to read, and the following day he brought it back agreeing that the book was good. Leon was very receptive. While we were speaking Lowell came to pick me up for a meeting and I told him Lowell was a Baha'i. Leon called me aside and asked permission to go with us, so we all left. Leon had now met the Baha'is and was making his own investigations.

'I made up my mind to visit Cassiem Davids and tell him about this new Faith. As I walked into his shop in Stuckeris St., he asked me what is this we were busy with, and I told him what I had read about the Baha'i Faith. Afterwards, Cassiem and myself with Asa, Gabeba, Naomi and the rest of our families had many discussions. At the same time Ismail Bayat also joined in.

'I was now strongly convinced the Baha'i Faith was true and Toyar was telling me it was time for me to declare. Somehow or other I did not get down to it, although I was now more or less following the Baha'i principles more than my own.

'On Sunday the 3rd September 1961 about 3 o'clock, the Tarins were all ready to go somewhere. I asked them where they were going. They said they were going to Tommy's place in Maitland and asked me to go with them. I got a feeling they were going to declare. I knew that I was going to declare, but we said nothing to each other.

'Through all this period my wife was watching my actions, and at one time became quite negative toward me. This did not last very long as I pointed out to her why I was going to become a Baha'i. I asked Leon if I could phone my wife and ask her to go with us, so we picked her up on the way to Tommy's house. When we got there we sat around the table and Tommy came in with the declaration cards and a prayer book and said to Leon, "I believe you are ready to declare," and he handed him a card. Leon took the card. Tommy then asked him if the others were ready to declare. He said, "Yes, my wife [Amina], daughter Qameela] and son-in-law [Abdullah Gameeldien] are ready."

'Tommy asked me, "What about you?" I said "Yes, I was ready long ago." He then asked me about my wife. I remembered Lowell had told me a story of someone who was blamed for influencing his wife to become a Baha'i. I was not going to allow myself to fall into that same situation. But to my astonishment she said that she would declare.

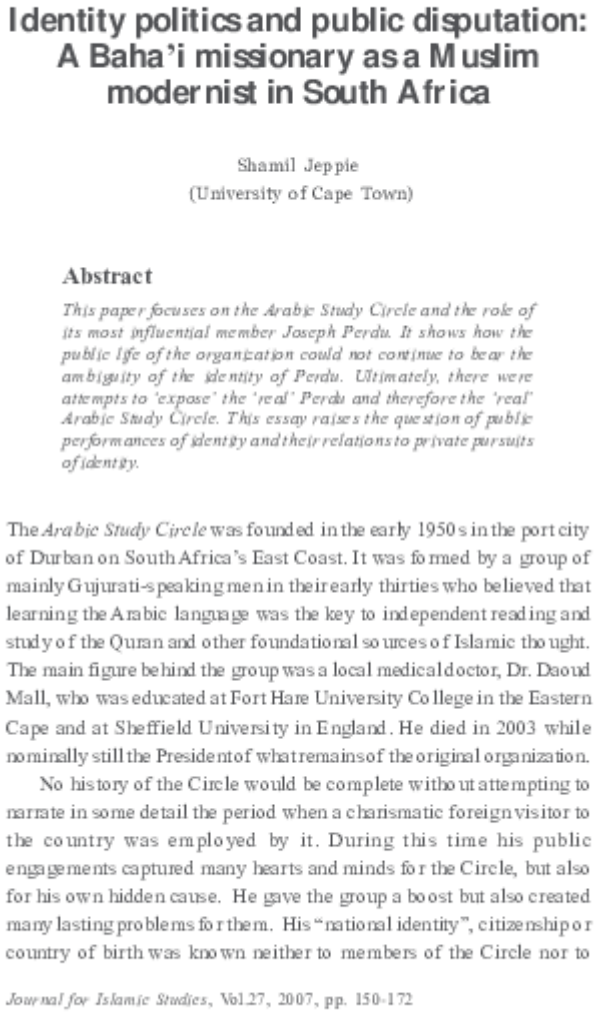
'As I watched them sign I was watching for my wife to sign first, as I remembered that story from Lowell.

'I then declared.'

Soon Majiet and Asa were put to the test by challenges from the clergy and being disowned by their parents and relatives. Majiet lost his job as he was also a tailor like Cassiem Davids, but employed by clothing factories managed by Muslims. Asa was a teacher at a Muslim School and also lost her job. The Noors and their children struggled against such prejudices for many years.

After the Crusade, both Asa and Majiet served at various times on the Spiritual Assembly of Cape Town and in the teaching field, Majiet as a travelling teacher to many parts of southern Africa, as far as South West Africa and Swaziland. Their children also became active Baha'i teachers and administrators. Later in life Majiet changed his name to Michael to avoid an Islamic label. Asa went on pilgrimage to the Baha'i World Centre in 1968 and

Majiet on pilgrimage to both the Holy Land and to Iran in 1970 (See entries for Davids, Gallow, Perdu.)



Identity politics and public disputation: A Baha'i missionary as a Muslim modernist in South Africa

Shamil Jeppie
(University of Cape Town)

Abstract

This paper focuses on the Arabic Study Circle and the role of its most influential member Joseph Perdu. It shows how the public life of the organization could not continue to bear the ambiguity of the identity of Perdu. Ultimately, there were attempts to 'expose' the 'real' Perdu and therefore the 'real' Arabic Study Circle. This essay raises the question of public performances of identity and their relations to private pursuits of identity.

The *Arabic Study Circle* was founded in the early 1950s in the port city of Durban on South Africa's East Coast. It was formed by a group of mainly Gujurati-speaking men in their early thirties who believed that learning the Arabic language was the key to independent reading and study of the Quran and other foundational sources of Islamic thought. The main figure behind the group was a local medical doctor, Dr. Daoud Mall, who was educated at Fort Hare University College in the Eastern Cape and at Sheffield University in England. He died in 2003 while nominally still the President of what remains of the original organization.

No history of the Circle would be complete without attempting to narrate in some detail the period when a charismatic foreign visitor to the country was employed by it. During this time his public engagements captured many hearts and minds for the Circle, but also for his own hidden cause. He gave the group a boost but also created many lasting problems for them. His "national identity", citizenship or country of birth was known neither to members of the Circle nor to

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Comments

August 23. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram concerning the Bahá'ís in Iran, a document referred to in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's "The Priceless Pearl" noting "This was the first time in its history that an attacked Faith was able to fight back with weapons."

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World-Wide Reverberations Mysterious dispensations of ever-watchful Providence, hastening, through turmoil and trial, the triumph of His undefeatable Faith, dictating at this critical hour the sudden deterioration of the situation confronting the largest community of the Bahá'í world, as evidenced by the violent recrudescence of the persecution afflicting intermittently, for over a century, its members residing in Bahá'u'lláh's native land.

Following the seizure and the destruction of the dome of the community's national administrative headquarters, the occupation of similar institutions in all provinces, the government declaration to the Majlis outlawing the Faith and a virulent press and radio campaign, distorting its history, calumniating its Founders, misrepresenting its tenets and obscuring its aims and purposes, a series of atrocities has been perpetrated in rapid succession throughout the length and breadth of the land against members of a sorely-tried community.

The House of the Báb, the foremost Shrine in Irán, has been twice desecrated and severely damaged; Bahá'u'lláh's ancestral Home at Takur occupied; the house of the Báb's uncle

razed to the ground; shops, farms plundered; crops burned, livestock destroyed; bodies disinterred in the cemeteries and mutilated; private houses broken into, damaged and looted; adults execrated and beaten; young women abducted and forced to marry Muslims; children mocked, reviled, beaten and expelled from the schools; boycott by butchers and bakers imposed; fifteen-year-old girl raped; eleven-month-old baby trampled underfoot; and pressure brought to bear upon believers to recant their Faith.

More recently a family of seven, the oldest eighty, the youngest nineteen, residing in Hurmuzak of the Province of Yazd, were set upon by a mob two thousand strong, accompanied by music of drums and trumpets, which hacked them to pieces with spades and axes. Meanwhile an official circular has been issued by the Prime Minister, addressed to Government Departments ordering the expulsion of all Bahá'í employes refusing to recant.

This highly distressing situation threatens to worsen during & Muharram and Safar.

Reacting to these barbarous acts, over a thousand groups and local Assemblies of the Bahá'í world appealed telegraphically to the authorities, and all National Assemblies addressed written communications to the Sháh, the government and parliament, pleading for justice and protection.

Finding written pleas unanswered, an appeal has been lodged with United Nations by representatives of the International Bahá'í Community at Geneva. Copies of the appeal were delivered to representatives of member nations of the Social and Economic Council, the Director of the Human Rights Division and certain specialized agencies of nongovernmental organizations with consultative status. Furthermore, President Eisenhower who, according to the newspapers, first mentioned the persecutions at a Press Conference in Washington, has been appealed to by the National representatives of the American Bahá'í Community and all Assemblies and groups in the United States to intervene on behalf of their oppressed sister community.

Whatever the outcome of the present heart-rending events, one fact emerges clear and indisputable. God's infant Faith, provided, through the operation of a quarter-century-long process associated with the first epoch of the formative age of the Faith, with the machinery of a divinely appointed Administrative Order, and utilizing in the course of the succeeding epoch, through the formulation of a series of national plans, culminating in the launching of the World Crusade, the newly-born administrative agencies for the systematic propagation of the Faith, is now gradually emerging from obscurity in the wake of the ordeal convulsing the overwhelming majority of the followers of the Faith.

The world-wide reverberations of this nation-wide commotion will be hailed by posterity as the mighty blast of God's trumpet designed to awaken, through the instrumentality of its oldest, most redoubtable, most vicious, most fanatical adversaries, countless multitudes, and the Chancelleries and Chief Magistrates of the East and of the West, to the existence and implications of the Faith proclaimed by His Messenger in this Day. **This long-desired, ardently-hoped-for emergence, itself a long-drawn-out process, is bound to pave the way for the emancipation of this same Faith from the fetters of orthodoxy in Islamic countries, as well as the ultimate recognition of the independent character of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in His homeland.**

Owing to the grievous losses sustained, and the necessity to demonstrate world-wide Bahá'í solidarity, an "Aid the Persecuted" Fund has been inaugurated for the purpose of bringing immediate relief to the despoiled and homeless victims. Myself contributing the equivalent of eighteen thousand dollars for this noble purpose. However conscious I am of the manifold demands on the adherents of the Faith, I am impelled to invite them to participate through contributions to be transmitted through their respective National Assemblies.

Moreover, undeterred by the obstacles placed in the path of the crusaders of Bahá'u'lláh, the historic decision has been arrived at to raise the Mother Temple of Africa in the City of Kampala, situated in its heart and constituting a supreme consolation to the masses of oppressed valiant brethren in the Cradle of the Faith. Every continent of the globe except Australasia will thereby pride itself on and derive direct spiritual benefits from its own Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Befitting recognition will, moreover, have been accorded the marvelous expansion of the Faith and the amazing multiplications of its administrative institutions throughout this continent, a continent fully deserving of a House of Worship, complementing the four national Haziratu'l-Quds already established, wherein the spirit of an unconquerable Faith can dwell, within whose walls the African adherents of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh can congregate, and from which anthems of praise glorifying the Most Great Name can ascend to the Concourse of the Abhá Kingdom.

Transmit message to Hands of the Cause and National Assemblies.

--Shoghi

[Cablegram, August 23, 1955]

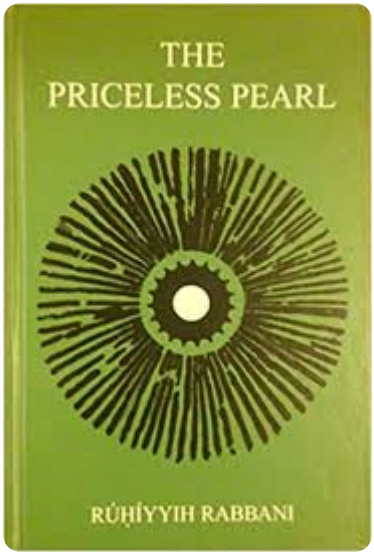
From Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*, Chapter 13, titled "The Rise of the Administrative Order"...

The worst crisis, however, which the Persian Bahá'í Community experienced in the thirty-six years of the Guardian's ministry, arose in 1955, when, as he cabled, a sudden deterioration took place in the affairs of this largest community in the Bahá'í world. In [a long cable, dated 23 August]((http://bahai-library.com/writings/shoghieffendi/mbw/sec-51.html), he reported to the Hands and National Assemblies what had been taking place: following the seizure by the authorities of the National Headquarters of the Persian believers in Tehran and the destruction of its large ornamental dome (a destruction during which one of the country's leading divines and a general of its army themselves took up pickaxes and went to work), local Bahá'í administrative headquarters all over Persia were seized and occupied, the Parliament of the country outlawed the Faith, a virulent press and radio campaign was started, distorting its history, calumniating its Founders, misrepresenting its teachings, and obscuring its aims and purposes - following all this a series of atrocities was perpetrated against the members of this sorely tried community throughout the entire country. In his summary of the terrible damage done and the "barbarous acts" committed, he cited such events as: the desecration of the House of the Bab in Shiraz, the foremost Shrine of the Faith in Persia, which had been severely damaged; the occupation of the ancestral home of Bahá'u'lláh; the pillaging of shops and farms owned by the believers and the looting of their homes, destruction of their livestock, burning of their crops and digging up and desecration of the Bahá'í dead in their cemeteries; adults were beaten; young women abducted and forced into marriage with Muslims; children were mocked, reviled and expelled from schools as well as being beaten; tradesmen boycotted Bahá'ís and refused to sell them food; a girl of fifteen was raped; an eleven-month-old baby was trampled underfoot; pressure was brought on believers to recant their Faith. More recently, he went on to say, a mob two thousand strong had hacked to pieces with spades and axes a family of seven - the oldest eighty and the youngest nineteen - to the sound of music and drums.

The Bahá'ís, at the instruction of their Guardian, had already, through the intermediary of telegrams and letters to the authorities in Persia from over one thousand groups and Assemblies throughout the world, protested against such unjust and lawless acts committed against their law-abiding brethren. In addition all National Assemblies had addressed letters to the Shah, the Government and the Parliament protesting against this unwarranted persecution of a harmless community on purely religious grounds. As all this brought forth no acknowledgement whatsoever from official quarters the Guardian instructed the International Bahá'í Community, accredited as a Non-Governmental Organization to the United Nations, to take the question to that body in Geneva, he himself nominating those whom he wished to act as representatives of the Community on this important occasion. copies of the Bahá'í appeal were delivered to representatives of the member nations of the

Social and Economic Council and the Director of the Human Rights Division, as well as to certain specialized agencies of the Non-Governmental Organizations enjoying consultative status. The President of the United States was likewise appealed to by the American National Assembly and by all groups and local Assemblies in that country to intervene on behalf of their oppressed sister community in Persia.

This was the first time in its history that an attacked Faith was able to fight back with weapons that possessed some strength to defend it. The significance of this was clearly brought out by Shoghi Effendi. whatever the outcome of these "heart-rending" events might be, one fact had clearly emerged: God's infant Faith, which had during the twenty-five years following the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá provided itself with the machinery of its divinely appointed Administrative Order, and subsequently utilized its newly born administrative agencies to systematically propagate that Faith through a series of national plans that had culminated in the World Crusade, was now, in the wake of this ordeal convulsing the overwhelming majority of its followers, emerging from obscurity. **the world-wide reverberations of these events would be hailed by posterity as the "mighty blast of God's trumpet"** which, through the instrumentality of the "oldest, most redoubtable, most vicious, most fanatical adversaries" of the Cause must awaken governments and heads of government, in both the East and West, to the existence and the implications of this Faith. So stormy were the circumstances surrounding these events in Persia and so impressive their repercussions abroad that **the Guardian stated they were bound to pave the way for the emancipation of the Faith from the fetters of orthodoxy in Islamic countries as well as for the ultimate recognition in His own homeland of the independent character of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.**



Comments

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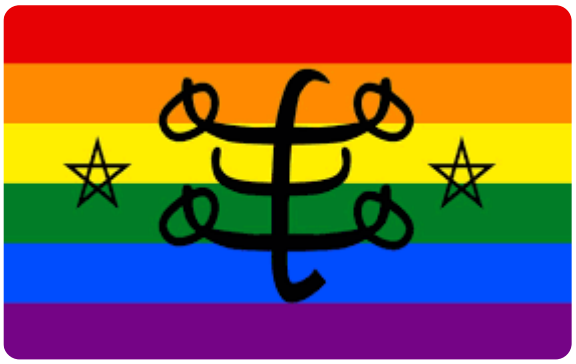
August 23. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice wrote an individual believer, stating "firmly resolve to change your way of life...Both you and your Bahá'í friend must first recognize that a homosexual relationship subverts the purpose of human life and that determined effort to overcome the wayward tendencies which promote this practice which, like other sexual vices, is so abhorrent; the Creator of all mankind will help you both to return to a path that leads to true happiness."

1229. A Homosexual Relationship Subverts the Purpose of Human Life

"There should be real incentive for you to courageously face the problems inherent in the situation you describe in your letter, and to **firmly resolve to change your way of life.** But you must desire to do so. **Both you and your Bahá'í friend must first recognize that a homosexual relationship subverts the purpose of human life and that determined effort to overcome the wayward tendencies which promote this practice which, like other sexual vices, is so abhorrent; the Creator of all mankind will help you both to return to a path that leads to true happiness.**"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, August 23, 1982)



Comments

August 24. On this date in 1912, an article in The Montreal Daily Star announced that "'Abdu'l-Bahá, one of the supreme religious figures of the Orient, and known the world over as the head of the Bahá'í movement, with over three million followers in his native Persia alone, will arrive ..."

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During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a Christian...

A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "**You must not dissociate yourself from it.** Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine

contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying ‘He is not a Bahá’í!’

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá’í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn’t a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu’l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá’í-Christian, a Bahá’í-Freemason, a Bahá’í-Jew, a Bahá’í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá’í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn’t a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá’ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu’l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá’í-Christian, a Bahá’í-Freemason, a Bahá’í-Jew, a Bahá’í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached by a student of higher criticism who asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá if he should continue in the church. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied: “Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá’í-Christian, a Bahá’í-Freemason, a Bahá’í-Jew, Bahá’í-Mohammedan.”

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá’ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

October 1921

In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!

Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is

necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: "Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, 'Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.' Now the same condition prevails."

This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, "What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?" let them answer: "We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu'l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant."

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements.

Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would later contradict these statements, with Bahá'ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrat-

ive Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient

"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.

"When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like

"**As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.

"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and

influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

532. On Becoming a Bahá'í Should Withdraw from Church

"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of teaching them the Faith that one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization. This is simply a matter of straight-forwardness and honesty. A great part of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerned His Second Coming and the preparation of His followers to be ready for it. The Bahá'ís believe He has come. No Christian Church believes this; on the contrary, they either look for Him still, or have ceased to believe that He will come. For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians.

"You should not formalize the method by which the withdrawal from the church is to be made, and certainly nothing should be added to a declaration form, if you use one. It should be left to the Local Spiritual Assembly which is accepting the declaration to satisfy itself, as it deems best in each case, that the new believer has already resigned from the church, or does so within a reasonable time of his declaration.

"In regard to the old believers, your Assembly should tactfully, and in a kindly way, make the Bahá'í position clear to them and gently persuade them to resign from their former churches. This is a matter for great tact and discretion. If such a believer remains adamant you will have to consider depriving him of his voting rights."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, November 21, 1968: Canadian Bahá'í News, Special Section, March 1973, p. 6)

On March 26, 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer told him how to go about resigning from his Masonic Order with an explanation not to "prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

1390. Resignation from the Masonic Order

"As regards your question about the Masonic Order, he considers that the honest and courageous thing for you to do is to inform your Lodge that you no longer consider yourself, for purely personal reasons, a Mason; and would like to have your name taken off their list. If they should press you for an explanation, which he imagines is unlikely, everybody being free to do as they please in this world, you can explain to them that in the present chaotic period the world is passing through, with so many streams and counterstreams of political thoughts and prejudices of all kinds, racial, religious, etc., storming the minds of men, that you wish to disentangle yourself from all association with the past and to stand alone, free in your own ideas.

"He does not think that such an explanation will prejudice the Masons or their friends, or arouse in them a feeling of anger against the Faith, or indeed need involve the Faith at all."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 26, 1956)

On February 17, 1956, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies."

1388. Bahá'ís Requested to Withdraw from Masonic and Other Secret Societies

"As regards your question about Masonry, the Bahá'ís, the Guardian feels very strongly, must learn at the present time to think internationally and not locally. Although each believer realizes that he is a member of one great spiritual family, a member of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, he does not often carry this thought through to its logical conclusion: which is that if the Bahá'ís all over the world each belong to some different kind of society or church or political party, the unity of the Faith will be destroyed, because inevitably they will become involved in doctrines and policies that are in some way against our Teachings, and often against another group of people in another part of the world, or another race, or another religious block.

"Therefore, all the Bahá'ís everywhere have been urged to give up their old affiliations and withdraw from membership in the Masonic and other secret Societies in order to be en-

tirely free to serve the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as a united body. Such groups as Masonry, however high the local standard may be, are in other countries gradually being influenced by the issues sundering the nations at present.

"The Guardian wants the Bahá'ís to disentangle themselves from anything that may in any way, now or in the future, compromise their independent status as Bahá'ís and the supra-national nature of their Faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 17, 1956)

Almost exactly a year earlier, on February 12, 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

1389. Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc.

"The point is not that there is something intrinsically wrong with Masonry, which no doubt has many very high ideals and principles, and has had a very good influence in the past.

"The reasons why the Guardian feels that it is imperative for the Bahá'ís to be dissociated from masonry at this time, and I might add, other secret associations, is that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character.

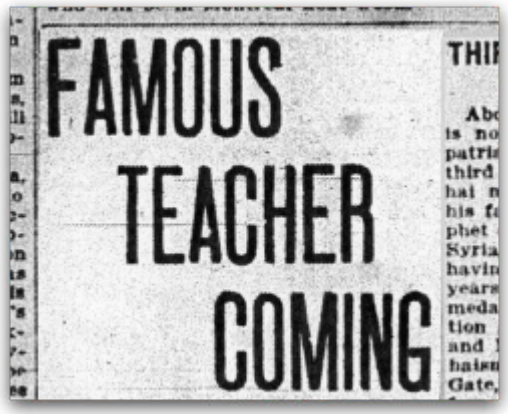
"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past

were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)


FAMOUS
TEACHER
COMING

Comments

August 24. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Invite valiant co-sharers in Holy Enterprise join me in prayers" for the completion of the Shrine of the Bab given "Sudden unexpected worsening of international situation, necessity to effect economy..."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 24. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Invite valiant co-sharers in Holy Enterprise join me in prayers" for the completion of the Shrine of the Bab given "Sudden unexpected worsening of international situation, necessity to effect economy, exigencies attending rise of World Administrative Center of Faith impelled me subsequently to place contract in Italy for provision of stones required for both Octagon and Dome, leaving resumption of construction work to indefinite future date."

Invite Valiant Co-Sharers in Holy Enterprise to Join Me in Prayers

Announce to National Assemblies of East and West that hallowed, historic enterprise which posterity will hail as most befitting tribute by present generation of builders of embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh in memory of the Prophet-Herald of Bahá'í Dispensation is now entering new stage of development presaging the approaching year of final consummation.

Owing to magnitude of task undertaken, manifold responsibilities already shouldered by Bahá'í communities of East and West, no further step beyond construction of Arcade, erection of crowning Parapet was originally envisaged. **Sudden unexpected worsening of international situation, necessity to effect economy, exigencies attending rise of World Administrative Center of Faith impelled me subsequently to place contract in**

Italy for provision of stones required for both Octagon and Dome, leaving resumption of construction work to indefinite future date.

Am now encouraged, owing response to recent call, to take eagerly anticipated decision to commence Octagon, first major unit of superstructure of sacred stately Edifice designed to support Drum and pave way for erection of Dome, last remaining unit of entire enterprise. Contract of approximately thirty thousand dollars has just been placed in Holy Land for construction of Octagon including eight Pinnacles, following completion of structural work commenced last June.

Further consignment hundred twenty tons, comprising lower part of Octagon and Pinnacles, four completed Facades, Door, Window Frames have arrived at Port of Haifa.

Invite valiant co-sharers in Holy Enterprise join me in prayers for its uninterrupted prosecution, in speedy fulfilment of hopes cherished by both Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá for glorification of eternal resting-place of Primal Point in bosom of God's Holy Mountain

--Shoghi

[Cablegram, August 24, 1951]

Comments

August 24. On this date in 1983, Sylvia Ioas died. She had served on the International Bahá'í Council, both as an appointed and elected member. She was the wife of Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas, who accompanied Shoghi Effendi and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum for their ...

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 24. On this date in 1983, Sylvia Ioas died. She had served on the International Bahá'í Council, serving both as an appointed and elected member. She was the wife of Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas, who accompanied Shoghi Effendi and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum for their May 26, 1952 visit of Israeli President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and was the author of a January 18, 1953, letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, later referenced in a Bahai News article in March 1953, defining the terms "Age" and "Epoch."

In the chapter titled *The Heart and Nerve Centre* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum describes this meeting...

In January 1949 Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, came to Haifa on his first official visit and the Mayor naturally invited Shoghi Effendi to attend the reception being given in his honour by the Municipality. The dilemma was acute, for if the Guardian did not go, it would, with every reason, be taken as an affront to the new Government, and if he did go he would inevitably be submerged in a sea of people where any pretence at protocol would be swept away (this was indeed the case, as my father, Shoghi Effendi's representative, reported after he returned from this reception). The Guardian therefore decided that as he would not be attending, but was more than willing to show courtesy to the Prime Minister of the new State, he would call upon him in person.

With great difficulty this was arranged through the good offices of the Mayor of Haifa, Shabatay Levy, as Mr. Ben Gurion's time in Haifa was very short and it was only two days before the first general election in the new State.

The interview took place on Friday evening, January 21st, in the private home the Prime Minister was staying in on Mt. Carmel and lasted about fifteen minutes. Ben Gurion enquired about the Faith and Shoghi Effendi's relation to it and asked if there was a book he could read; Shoghi Effendi answered his questions and assured him he would send him a copy of his own book God Passes By — which he later did, and which was acknowledged with thanks. Typical of the whole history of the Cause and the constant problems that beset it was a long article which appeared in the leading English-language newspaper on December 20, 1948, in which, in the most favourable terms, its teachings were set forth and the station of Shoghi Effendi as its World Head mentioned. On January 28, 1949, there appeared in the letter column of this paper a short and extraordinary statement, signed "Bahai U.N. Observer", which flatly refuted the article and asserted, "Mr. Rabbani is not the Guardian of the Bahai faith, nor its World Leader" and gave the New History Society in New York as a source of further information

As there was no such thing as a "Bahai U.N. Observer" this move was plainly inspired by the once-more hopeful band of old Covenant-breakers, who sought, at the outset of a new regime, to blacken Shoghi Effendi's reputation and divert attention from his station by referring to Ahmad Sohrab's rootless group in America. At a later date, when in 1952 the Covenant-breakers in Bahji brought their case in the local courts against Shoghi Effendi for the demolition of an old building near the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, Sohrab sought, unsuccessfully, to bring pressure on the Minister of Religious Affairs to discredit the Bahá'í claims. It was with attacks such as this, both open and covert, that the Guardian, on the threshold of a new phase in the development of the affairs of the Faith at its World Centre, once more had to content.

It had long been the desire of Shoghi Effendi to obtain control of the Mansion at Mazra'ih, where Bahá'u'lláh had first lived when He quitted once-for-all the walls of the prison-city of 'Akka. This property was a Muslim religious endowment and had now fallen vacant. It was planned by the government to turn it into a rest home for officials. All efforts, through the departments concerned, to procure this property were unavailing until Shoghi Effendi appealed directly to Ben Gurion, explaining its significance to the Bahá'ís and his desire to have it visited by pilgrims as a place so closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh. The Prime Minister himself then intervened in the matter and it was leased to the Bahá'ís as an historic

site. Shoghi Effendi proudly informed the Bahá'í world, on December 16, 1950, that its keys had been delivered to us, by the Israeli authorities, after the lapse of more than fifty years.

The affairs of the Bahá'í Community, in matters concerning its day-to-day dealings with the government in connection with the work at the World Centre, had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and was at first handled by the head of the Department that dealt with Muslim affairs. This Shoghi Effendi violently objected to as it implied the Faith was in some way identified with Islam. After much negotiation a letter was received from the Minister of Religious Affairs, dated December 13, 1953, addressed to "His Eminence, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith" in which he said:

"...I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you in matters concerning the Bahá'í Centre in our State.

In the name of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the State of Israel, I wish to assure Your Eminence that full protection will be given to the Holy Places as well as to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith."

The victory was all the more welcome, following as it did the previously mentioned court case against Shoghi Effendi brought on a technicality by the Covenant-breakers in connection with the demolition of a house adjoining the Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji. Never tired of seeking to publicly humiliate and discredit the Head of the Faith, be it 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian, they had had the temerity to summon Shoghi Effendi to appear in court as a witness. Once more, greatly concerned for the honour of the Cause at its World Centre, Shoghi Effendi appealed direct to the Prime Minister, sending as his representatives the President, Secretary-General and Member-at-Large of the International Bahá'í Council (whom he had summoned from Italy for this purpose) to Jerusalem on more than one visit to press the strategy he himself had devised. These representations were successful and on the grounds of its being a purely religious issue it was removed by Government from the jurisdiction of the civil courts. As soon as the plaintiffs found their plan to humiliate Shoghi Effendi had been forestalled, they were willing to settle the case by negotiation. That the authorities and the Bahá'í Community were equally pleased by this conclusion of the matter is shown in these letters written to the Guardian by members of the Prime Minister's staff — two men to whom the Faith owed much for their sympathetic efforts on its behalf at that time:

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Jerusalem, 19th May, 1952. His Eminence Shoghi Rabbani,

World Head of the Bahá'í Faith,

Haifa. Your Eminence, I am instructed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th May addressed to the Prime Minister. As you are no doubt aware, the dispute between yourself as the World head of the Bahá'í Faith and members of the family of the founder of the Faith has found its solution and there is no need, therefore, to take any administrative action in order to solve the problem. May I express to you our gratitude for your wise and benevolent attitude taken in the dispute which enabled us to impose a just and, as we hope, a lasting solution on the dissident group? The Prime Minister assures you of his personal esteem and sends you his best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

S. Eynath

Legal Adviser

The second letter was from Walter Eytan, Director-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and was written to Shoghi Effendi the following day. In it he says: "...Having done my best throughout to be of assistance to Your Eminence in the solution of these vexing problems, I heard with great satisfaction this morning that complete agreement had been reached. I sincerely trust that this puts an end to a period of anxiety for Your Eminence and the members of the Bahá'í Faith, and that you will now be able to proceed with your plans without further interference from any quarter."

It is significant to note that they address Shoghi Effendi as "His Eminence", a title which, though still far below what his position merited, was the one that had been introduced in the earliest days of his ministry, but never really used by any officials until the formation of the Jewish State.

The cordial nature of the relations established between the Guardian and the officials of the State of Israel encouraged Shoghi Effendi to ascertain if the President would care to visit the Bahá'í Shrine in Haifa; when word was received that he would accept such an invitation, Shoghi Effendi formally invited him to do so and arrangements were made for the morning of April 26, 1954, at which time, the Director of the President's Office wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the President would "be pleased to pay you an official visit". Accordingly the President and his wife arrived at the home of the Master, attended by two officials, partook of light refreshment and were presented by the Guardian with a Persian album, painted with miniatures and bound in silver, containing some photographs of the Shrines,

as a memento of their visit. The Presidential party, with Shoghi Effendi and those who accompanied him, then proceeded to the gardens on Mt. Carmel. It was the first time in the history of the Cause that the Head of an independent nation had ever made an official visit of this kind and it constituted another milestone in the development of the World Centre of the Faith. The President and his companions showed the greatest respect to the Shrine of the Bab, removing their shoes as we did, before entering it, the men keeping their hats on out of reverence as Jews for a holy place; it was a very moving moment to see President Ben Zvi standing beside Shoghi Effendi, the former with his European hat, the latter with his simple black fez, before the threshold. After a few words of explanation from Shoghi Effendi we all withdrew and walked about he gardens for a few minutes before saying good-bye in front of the Oriental Pilgrim House where the President's car was awaiting him.

On April 29th the President wrote personally to the Guardian: "I should like to express my thanks for your kind hospitality and for the interesting time I spent with you visiting the beautiful Gardens and remarkable Shrine... I do appreciate the friendship which the Bahá'í Community has for Israel and it is my sincere hope that we may all live to see the strengthening of amity between all peoples on earth." On May 5th the Guardian replied to this letter in equally warm terms: "...It was a great pleasure to meet Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi, and be able to show you one of our places of Bahá'í pilgrimage in Israel... If it suits your convenience, Mrs. Rabbani and I, accompanied by Mr. Ioas, would like to call upon Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi in Jerusalem..." The time for this return call was set for the afternoon of May 26th and we had tea and a pleasant conversation with the President and his wife, in her own way as much a personality as her husband and equally nice. In the interim between these two visits Shoghi Effendi had sent to the President some Bahá'í books which he had promised him and these had been acknowledged with the thanks of the President and the assurance that he would read them with great interest. Ever meticulous in all matters, Shoghi Effendi wrote on June 3rd to the President: "I wish to thank you and Mrs. Ben Zvi for your kind hospitality. Mrs. Rabbani and I enjoyed our visit with you very much, and I feel sure that this opportunity we have had of visiting with you our Bahá'í Holy Places and calling upon you in the capital of Israel has served to reinforce the bonds of affection and esteem which unite the Bahá'ís to the people and Government of Israel. With kind regards to you and Mrs. Ben Zvi..." Thus ended another memorable chapter in the process of winning recognition for the Faith at its World Centre.

On January 18, 1953, a letter written by Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, later referenced in a *Bahai News* article in March 1953, defined the terms

"Age" and "Epoch." He had served as a member of the NSA of the US, a member of the International Bahá'í Council, and a Custodian. Among other roles, he had accompanied Shoghi Effendi and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum for their May 26, 1952, visit of Israeli President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi.

LETTER FROM HAIFA

DEFINES "AGES"

AND "EPOCHS"

In a letter dated January 18, 1953,

written on behalf of the Guardian by

Leroy Ioas, Assistant Secretary, the

terms "age" and "epoch" as used

by the Guardian are defined.

"The Faith is divided into three

Ages, the Heroic. the Formative, the

Golden Age, as has been outlined in

his writings. The Heroic Age closed

with the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

The Formative Age is divided into

epochs. The first epoch lasted 25

years. We are now actually in the

second epoch of the Formative Age.

How long the Formative Age will

last is not known - and there will

probably be a number of epochs in

it.

"The Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Baha

is divided into epochs. The first Seven

Year Plan constituted the first

stage of the first epoch; the second

Seven Year Plan constitutes the second

stage; while the ten year Crusade

will constitute the third stage

of the first epoch of the Divine Plan.

The first epoch of the Divine Plan

will conclude with the conclusion of

the ten year Crusade."

-NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Comments

August 24. On this date in 2007, Eunice L. Braun, a Bahá'í author who served as the head of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, as an editor for Bahá'í News, and as an Auxiliary Board member, died in Glenview, Illinois.

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 24. On this date in 2007, Eunice L. Braun, a Bahá'í author who served as the head of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, as an editor for Bahá'í News, and as an Auxiliary Board member, died in Glenview, Illinois.

Born as Eunice L. Hockspeier in 1915, she served on the Editorial Committee of Bahá'í News from 1951 to 1970, serving as a member and being appointed as Managing Editor and International News Editor. She also served as head of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of the United States from 1952 to 1971. When she announced her resignation from the position at the 1971 National Convention Firuz Kazemzadeh noted her business acumen, giving the example that she managed to secure funds for the building for Bahá'í Publications, and that she had managed to keep published Bahá'í literature inexpensive and attractive. She represented the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of the United States at the Bahá'í Continental Conference of Africa in Liberia in 1971.

In 1972 Eunice was appointed as an Auxiliary Board Member at the US National Convention. In 1975 she taught the history of the Faith at the Alaskan Bahá'í Summer School in Juneau. She spoke at a training conference in Texas in 1976 and at the 1976 US National Convention. She served as an Auxiliary Board member until at least the mid 1980's.

Eunice died in Glenview, Illinois on August, 24, 2007. She was survived by her nieces and nephews, who were children of her brother Lloyd Hockspeier, and also by her husband of 70 years, Leonard, who died in 2009 at the age of 99.

Comments

August 24. On this date in 2008, Paul Lample, member of the Universal House of Justice, gave a talk at the Nashville, Tennessee, Bahá'í Center about "the great spiritual enterprise" the worldwide Baha'i community has embarked on.

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 24. On this date in 2008, Paul Lample, member of the Universal House of Justice, gave a talk at the Nashville, Tennessee, Bahá'í Center about "the great spiritual enterprise" the worldwide Baha'i community has embarked on.

Comments

August 25. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The whole purpose of Bahá'u'lláh is that we should become a new kind of people, people who are upright, kind, intelligent, truthful, and honest and who live according to His great laws laid down for this new epoch in man's development."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 25. On this date in 1944, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The whole purpose of Bahá'u'lláh is that we should become a new kind of people, people who are upright, kind, intelligent, truthful, and honest and who live according to His great laws laid down for this new epoch in man's development. To call ourselves Bahá'ís is not enough, our inmost being must become ennobled and enlightened through living a Bahá'í life."

2278. He hopes that you will develop into Bahá'ís in character as well as in belief. The whole purpose of Bahá'u'lláh is that we should become a new kind of people, people who are upright, kind, intelligent, truthful, and honest and who live according to His great laws laid down for this new epoch in man's development. To call ourselves Bahá'ís is not enough, our inmost being must become ennobled and enlightened through living a Bahá'í life.

(25 August 1944 to the Louhelen School, Youth Session)

Comments

August 25. On this date in 1959, Pritam Singh, believed to be the first member of the Sikh community in India to accept the Bahá'í Faith, died.

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 25. On this date in 1959, Pritam Singh, believed to be the first member of the Sikh community in India to accept the Bahá'í Faith, died.

On April 10, 1934, Shoghi Effendi wrote Pritam Singh "the realization of your inability to serve as Secretary to the National Spiritual Assembly has deeply grieved his heart. It is, indeed, a matter of deep regret that such an able, devoted and efficient worker like you should be forced to leave such an important post in the national Sphere of the administration. You should, therefore, make every possible sacrifice in order to continue serving the Cause in this field where you have already attained such a high distinction."

[To Professor Pritam Singh]

April 10, 1934

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your letter of March 13th addressed to the Guardian has just been received through the kind care of our dear Mr. Vakil, and the realization of your inability to serve as Secretary to the National Spiritual Assembly has deeply grieved his heart. It is, indeed, a matter of deep regret that such an able, devoted and efficient worker like you should be forced to leave such an important post in the national Sphere of the administration. You should, therefore, make every possible sacrifice in order to continue serving the Cause in this field where you have already attained such a high distinction.

The Guardian, however, wishes by no means to force you to occupy a post which, in addition to the tremendous amount of work it demands, entails a responsibility which, for some reason or another, you may feel unable to assume. He would advise you, however,

to submit your case to the National Spiritual Assembly at its next meeting at Delhi, that they may carefully consider the possibility of your resignation from the National Secretariat. They will surely consider the matter sympathetically and dispassionately and will give you ail the advice you need. The National Spiritual Assembly cannot refuse accepting a resignation when it is well Justified, and when it is done not with the purpose of shirking responsibility but with the intention of giving a chance to others to prove themselves worthy of occupying responsible posts in the administrative field.

Assuring you of the Guardian's prayers on your behalf, and with, his best wishes for the development of your work for the Cause.

Dear and valued co-worker

Your sustained and inspiring labours under such trying and difficult circumstances are indeed highly praiseworthy and meritorious. I will pray from the depths of my heart that you. will find it possible to lend your invaluable assistance to your collaborators in both the teaching and administrative fields of Bahá'í activity. Your competence, your loyalty, your experience and knowledge of the essentials of the Faith eminently qualify you to take an active and leading part in its manifold activities. Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

Pritam Singh is believed to be the first member of the Sikh community in India to accept the Bahá'í Faith, and the first to publish a Bahá'í weekly magazine in India. He was born on November 16th, 1881, in Punjab.

Prof. Pritam Singh obtained his B. A. degree in History, Economics and Political Science with distinction. In 1905, he became a teacher in Achison College, Lahore. He received his Master's degree in Economics from the university of Calcutta. He was appointed Professor of Economics and joined the University of Punjab. He was a Linguist and knew Hindi, Urdu, Gurmukhi, Persian and English.

He received the message of Bahá'u'lláh from Mirzá Mahmud soon after his graduation in 1904. He undertook teaching trips alone, and with Ms Martha Root and Dr. G. Y. Chitnis. He resigned from his profession to work for the Cause of God. He had simple habits. For the last few years of his life he pioneered to Amritsar where there were no other Bahá'ís at that time. He was one of the earliest secretaries of the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma. He passed away peacefully in his sleep on August 25th, 1959.

Pritam Singh

Comments

August 25. On this date in 1963, the UHJ wrote all NSAs "the sad fate which has overtaken the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád, the first Temple raised to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh. Due to its unsafe condition, resulting from earthquakes, the building has been entirely demolished and the site cleared

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25 August 1963

To the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The whole Bahá'í World will be grief-stricken at the news of the sad fate which has overtaken the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád, the first Temple raised to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh. Due to its unsafe condition, resulting from earthquakes, the building has been entirely demolished and the site cleared.

The building of this edifice, the only structure of its kind to be raised and completed in the lifetime of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was described by the beloved Guardian as "a lasting witness to the fervor and the self-sacrifice of the Oriental believers." This "enterprise," the Guardian further wrote, "must rank not only as the first major undertaking launched through the

concerted efforts of His followers in the Heroic Age of His Faith, but as one of the most brilliant and enduring achievements in the history of the first Bahá'í century."

The Bahá'í center in 'Ishqábád was founded in the days of Bahá'u'lláh. Already during His lifetime preliminary steps had been adopted by the friends of that community to build, in accordance with the provisions of the Most Holy Book, a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

However, the project had to be postponed until 1902, at the end of the first decade of the Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, when He initiated its construction, called on the friends in the East to offer their contributions towards the fulfillment of this goal, and personally encouraged and directed its development at every stage. The Báb's cousin, the venerable Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, offered his total wealth towards this meritorious enterprise, established his residence in that city, and personally supervised its construction.

The laying of the cornerstone of this edifice at a ceremony attended by the delegate of the Czar—the Governor-General of Turkistan—and the initial steps taken to raise this first House of Worship of the Bahá'í World, inspired the friends in America, who, in 1903, eager to demonstrate the quality of their faith, petitioned 'Abdu'l-Bahá for permission to erect the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West.

In addition to the Temple itself, two schools, one for boys and one for girls, and a pilgrim house were built. The local community, and the activities of the friends throughout the provinces of Turkistan expanded and developed in stature until 1928, when the law expropriating religious edifices was applied to this Temple. However, under the terms of two five-year leases, the Bahá'í community was permitted to continue to use the building as a house of worship. In 1938 the Temple was completely expropriated and converted into an art gallery.

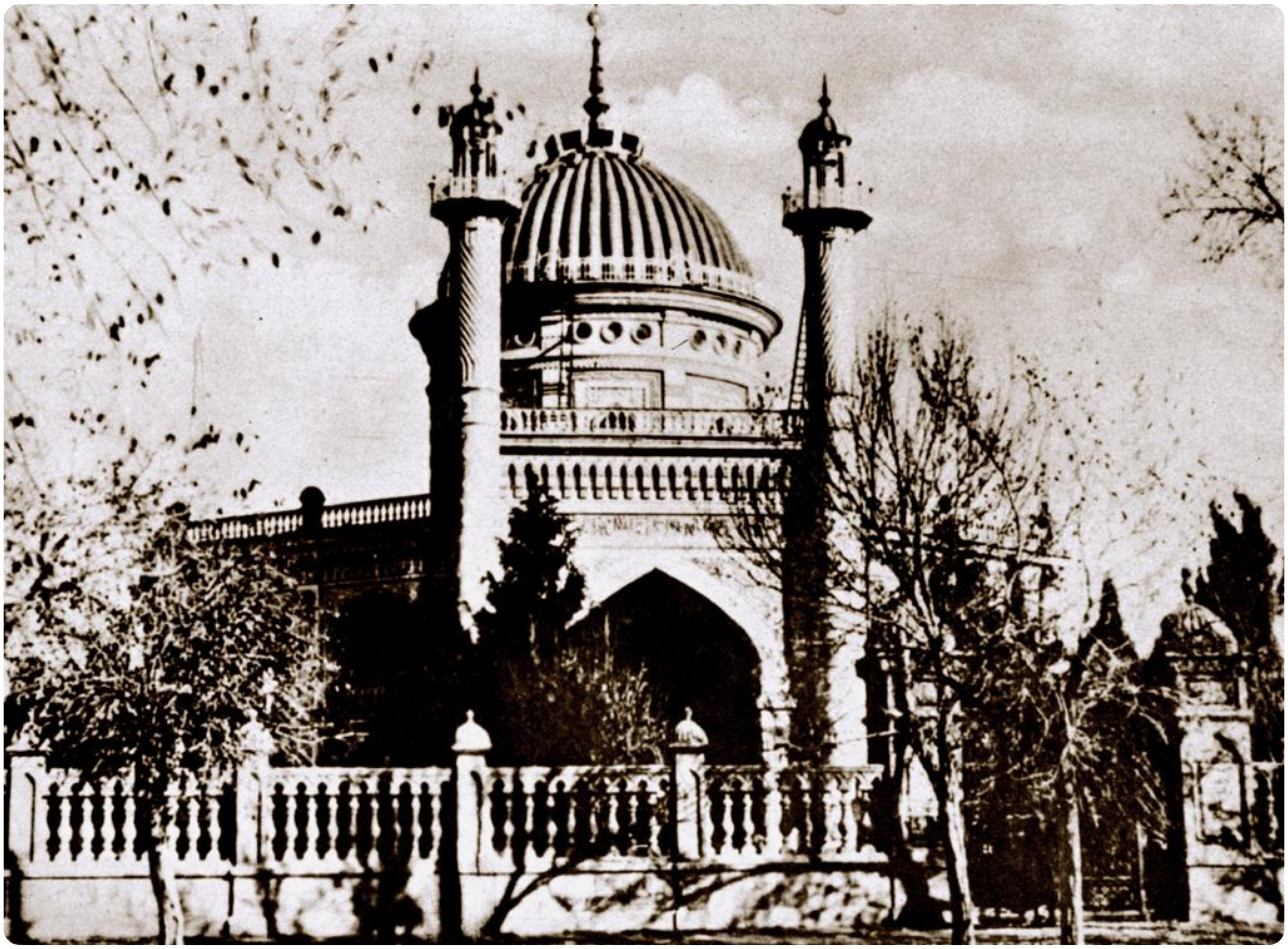
In 1948 violent earthquakes shook the whole town causing devastation and ruin. The building was seriously damaged. The only section which remained relatively secure was the central rotunda. Heavy yearly rains further weakened the structure to such a degree as to endanger the safety of houses in the vicinity. It was at this point that the authorities decided to demolish the remaining edifice and clear the site.

A reliable report, recently received, indicates that had the Temple been restored to us at this point, we should have had no option but to raze the building ourselves.

Please share this news with the friends but we do not wish National Assemblies, Local Assemblies or individual believers to take any action.

With loving greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]



Comments

August 26. On this date in 1954, Horace Holley, a Hand of the Cause of God, gave a public address titled "Challenge to Chaos: The Mission of the Bahá'í Faith" delivered at the Bahá'í Temple Foundation Hall which he started by asking "Unity of God"? Who is God? What is God? Where is God?"

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August 26. On this date in 1954, Horace Holley, a Hand of the Cause of God and later a Custodian, gave a public address titled "Challenge to Chaos: The Mission of the Bahá'í Faith" delivered at the Bahá'í Temple Foundation Hall in Wilmette which he started by asking "Unity of God"? Who is God? What is God? Where is God?"

Horace Holley, as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, had been in conflict with Ahmad Sohrab and Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie over the "New History Society."

Ahmad Sohrab had served as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary and interpreter from 1912 to 1919, and in 1929, with Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and his wife Julie, formed the "New History Society" in order to propagate the Bahá'í Faith. Conflict arose when Horace Holley, member of the National Spiritual Assembly, and the New York Spiritual Assembly attempted to gain control of the "New History Society," ultimately resulting in Ahmad Sohrab and the Chanlers' being declared Covenant-breakers around 1939.

On March 31, 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that "the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a

religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion..."

On March 10, 1958, four months after Shoghi Effendi's death, the Hands of the Cause of God resident in Haifa addressed a letter "To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley" feeling "it necessary to urge that the statement 'A New Bahá'í Era' be withdrawn from circulation.

To the Hand of the Cause, Mr. Horace Holley

March 10, 1958

Revered Bahá'í Brother:

The Hands in the Holy Land are sending a detailed answer to the questions raised in the letter of February 24, 1958 addressed to us by the American Hands and the National Spiritual Assembly.

We believe that the points covered in our letter also meet the request made in your separate communication of February 25 to your fellow Hands in Haifa.

Here, as you know, we receive letters from all parts of the world which reflect the approach of the believers of diverse backgrounds to the **problems created by the beloved Guardian's passing.** As a result, the Custodians have been made very conscious of the necessity to strive for unity in the approach to fundamental matters affecting the structure and future development of the Cause. The Custodians from East and West are aware of the wisdom of avoiding statements or points of view on basic issues which cannot be accepted equally by East and West, and indeed by all of the Bahá'í world, especially in this period, so soon after the ascension of the beloved Guardian, when **we are still unable to grasp the full implications of the present situation.**

It would have been a great help if you yourself could have served here in these early and critical months, and given us the benefit of your experience and clarity of thought on the many pressing issues with which we have had to cope.

You will now, we feel sure, understand our delicate position and the reasons why we felt it necessary to urge that the statement "A New Bahá'í Era" be withdrawn from circulation. Your fellow-Hands serving here are confident you will place this whole question and its world-wide implications before the members of your National Assembly in such a way that they will fully understand the reasons underlying the actions taken here.

No doubt when the entire body of the Hands gather at our next meeting later this year we will have many things to discuss, and each one win have a greater contribution to make in view of this tragic year's experiences.

We all send you our devoted love and assure you that you are often remembered in our prayers.

Yours in the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

Comments

August 26. On this date in 1965, the UHJ wrote "the date of the beginning of the year of patience normally commences when one of the parties notifies the Assembly that they have separated with the intention of divorce. However, the Assembly may establish the beginning of the year of patience ...."

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August 26. On this date in 1965, the Universal House of Justice wrote "the date of the beginning of the year of patience normally commences when one of the parties notifies the Assembly that they have separated with the intention of divorce. However, the Assembly may establish the beginning of the year of patience on a prior date provided it is satisfied such prior date reflects the actual date of separation and there is good reason for so doing."

1322. Beginning of the Year of Patience Normally Commences When Parties Notify Assembly of their Separation with Intent to Divorce

"Thus the date of the beginning of the year of patience normally commences when one of the parties notifies the Assembly that they have separated with the intention of divorce. However, the Assembly may establish the beginning of the year of patience on a prior date provided it is satisfied such prior date reflects the actual date of separation and there is good reason for so doing."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, August 26, 1965)

Comments

August 27. On this date in 1852, subsequent to a failed assassination attempt by some Bábís of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, Fatimah Baraghani, also known as Qurrat al-Ayn, was executed. An influential Bábí theologian, she would shun most of her family because they did not adopt her new religion.

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August 27. On this date in 1852, subsequent to a failed assassination attempt by some Bábís of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, Fatimah Baraghani, also known as Qurrat al-Ayn (Consoloation of the Eyes) and Táhirih (the Pure One), was executed. An influential Bábí theologian, she would shun most of her family because they did not adopt her new religion.

Fatimah Baraghani, later known as Qurrat al-Ayn (Consoloation of the Eyes) and Táhirih (the Pure One), was an influential theologian of the Bábi faith.

Her interpretation of the Báb's message was considered radical by many of his other believers, including Mullá Muḥammad 'Alí-i-Bárfurúshi, also known as Quddús, who was the most prominent disciple of the Báb and the eighteenth and final Letter of the Living who accused her of "heresy." Among her theological contributions was that she "wedded the messianic message to the figure of al-Bab." and "her rise to leadership aptly characterized the messianic ethos around which the entire Bábi movement was formed."

She abandoned and shunned most of her family because they did not adopt her new religion.

From *The Master's Last Tablet to America* in *Bahá'í World Faith—Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

Likewise Qurratu'l-'Ayn, who is celebrated in all the world, when she believed in God and was attracted to the Divine Breaths, she forsook her two eldest sons, although they were her two oldest children, because they did not become believers, and thereafter did not meet them. She said: "All the friends of God are my children, but these two are not. I will have nothing to do with them."

And from Martha Root's *Táhirih the Pure*

The question of her returning to her husband arose, and this she absolutely refused to do. Try as they might, she would not consent to be reconciled with her husband, Mullá Muhammad. She gave as her reason: "He, in that he rejects God's religion, is unclean; between us there can be naught in common."

She has become the object of hagiographic work, including numerous biographies, poems, songs, choreographed dances, and paintings. The Tahirih Justice Center is named after her.

Comments

August 27. On this date in 1926, Queen Marie of Romania "responded to this first communication from the Guardian and wrote to him what he described as a 'deeply touching letter.'"

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August 27. On this date in 1926, Queen Marie of Romania "responded to this first communication from the Guardian and wrote to him what he described as a 'deeply touching letter.'" Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter, Princess Ileana of Romania, disputes this claim.

From Chapter 4 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Priceless Pearl*, titled "Martha Root and Queen Marie of Rumania"...

On 27 August 1926 the Queen responded to this first communication from the Guardian and wrote to him what he described as a "deeply touching letter":

Bran August 27th 1926

Dear Sir,

I was deeply moved on reception of your letter.

Indeed a great light came to me with the message of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It came as all great messages come at an hour of dire grief and inner conflict and distress, so the seed sank deeply.

My youngest daughter finds also great strength and comfort in the teachings of the beloved masters. We pass on the message from mouth to mouth and all those we give it to see light suddenly lighting before them and much that was obscure and perplexing becomes simple, luminous and full of hope as never before.

That my open letter was balm to those suffering for the cause, is indeed a great happiness to me, and I take it as a sign that God accepted by humble tribute.

The occasion given me to be able to express myself publically, was also His Work, for indeed it was a chain of circumstances of which each link led me unwittingly one step further, till suddenly all was clear before my eyes and I understood why it had been.

Thus does He lead us finally to our ultimate destiny.

Some of those of my caste wonder at and disapprove my courage to step forward pronouncing words not habitual for Crowned Heads to pronounce, but I advance by an inner urge I cannot resist.

With bowed head I recognize that I too am but an instrument in greater hands and rejoice in the knowledge.

Little by little the veil is lifting, grief tore it in two. And grief was also a step leading me ever nearer truth, therefore do I not cry out against grief!

May you and those beneath your guidance be blessed and upheld by the sacred strength of those gone before you.

Marie

Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter, Princess Ileana of Romania, disputes this claim:

"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, On April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Comments

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August 27. On this date in 1943, Anna Rudd, wife of the first Swedish Bahá'í pioneer August Rudd, passed away.

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Comments

August 27. On this date in 1998, the UHJ wrote "In the light of the Teachings which are well known to you, and given the repeated statements of the House of Justice on this subject, it is not correct to insist that the House of Justice has an interpretative function."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 27. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice wrote "In the light of the Teachings which are well known to you, and given the repeated statements of the House of Justice on this subject, it is not correct to insist that the House of Justice has an interpretative function....The meanings of the terms "elucidation" and "interpretation," as they are used with regard to the functions of Bahá'í institutions, should not of course be confused with each other. The elucidations of the Universal House of Justice stem from its legislative function, and as such differ from interpretation."

Please also see the Universal House of Justice's letter dated October 25, 1984 which clarifies the qualitative difference between the Guardian's prerogative of interpretation and the power of elucidation of the Universal House of Justice.

The Universal House of Justice Department of the Secretariat

27 August 1998

[To an individual]

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has asked us to convey the following reply to your letter . . . seeking clarification on the "interpretative function" of that institution....

In the light of the Teachings which are well known to you, and given the repeated statements of the House of Justice on this subject, it is not correct to insist that the House of Justice has an interpretative function. This matter has been dealt with in three published letters, dated 9 March 1965, 27 May 1966 and 7 December 1969, appearing in Messages from the Universal House of Justice: 1963–1986 (U.S. Bahá'í Publishing Trust). A careful study of these letters can provide you with the answers you seek. However, the House of Justice is happy to offer some further comments for your consideration.

Any reference to authoritative or binding interpretation of Bahá'í Scripture is a reference to the divinely guided meaning given to such Scripture by either 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian, the two persons authorized in the sacred Texts to interpret the Teachings. With regard to Shoghi Effendi, your letter cites a passage from the 9 March 1965 letter of the House of Justice which says: "The Guardian reveals what the Scripture means; his interpretation is a statement of truth which cannot be varied. Upon the Universal House of Justice, in the words of the Guardian, 'has been conferred the exclusive right of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the Bahá'í writings.'" In keeping with its legislative function the House of Justice exercises the role of elucidation based on passages in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and statements in the writings of the Guardian. For example, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

It is incumbent upon these members (of the Universal House of Justice) to . . . deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book . . . and bear upon daily transactions....

(Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 20)

Further, in response to a question raised by a National Spiritual Assembly about the Universal Court of Arbitration, the Guardian, in a letter dated 9 April 1923, defined such explanation as being in the domain of the Universal House of Justice and anticipated its function of elucidation:

. . . regarding the nature and scope of the Universal Court of Arbitration, this and other similar matters will have to be explained and elucidated by the Universal House of Justice, to which, according to the Master's explicit Instructions, all important fundamental questions must be referred....

(Published in Bahá'í Administration: Selected Messages 1922–1932 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 47)

The meanings of the terms "elucidation" and "interpretation," as they are used with regard to the functions of Bahá'í institutions, should not of course be confused with each other. The elucidations of the Universal House of Justice stem from its legislative function, and as such differ from interpretation. The divinely inspired legislation of the House of Justice does not attempt to say what the revealed Word means—it states what must be done in cases where the revealed Text or its authoritative interpretation is not explicit; and in this context it offers explanations. It is, therefore, on quite a different level from the sacred Text, and the Universal House of Justice is empowered to abrogate or amend its own legislation whenever it judges the conditions make this desirable. The major distinction between the two functions of elucidation and interpretation, to repeat the point differently, is that legislation with its resultant outcome of elucidation is susceptible of amendment by the House of Justice itself, whereas the Guardian's interpretation is a statement of truth which cannot be varied.

While the House of Justice does not interpret, it makes deductions on the basis of the revealed Texts and their authorized interpretations. This is clearly indicated in the following statement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Briefly, this is the wisdom of referring the laws of society to the House of Justice. In the religion of Islám, similarly, not every ordinance was explicitly revealed; nay not a tenth part of a tenth part was included in the Text; although all matters of major importance were specifically referred to, there were undoubtedly thousands of laws which were unspecified. These were devised by the divines of a later age according to the laws of Islamic jurisprudence, and individual divines made conflicting deductions from the original revealed ordinances. All these were enforced. Today this process of deduction is the right of the body of the House of Justice, and the deductions and conclusions of individual learned men have no authority, unless they are endorsed by the House of Justice. The difference is precisely this, that from the conclusions and endorsements of the body of the House of Justice whose members are elected by and known to the worldwide Bahá'í community, no differences will arise; whereas the conclusions of individual divines and scholars would definitely lead to differences, and result in schism, division, and dispersion. The oneness of the Word would be destroyed, the unity of the Faith would disappear, and the edifice of the Faith of God would be shaken.

(Published in Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963–1986 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1996), p. 86)

In the normal use of the term, interpretation is the natural activity of an intelligent mind. As has been stated on previous occasions in the communications of the House of Justice, there is an important distinction made in the Faith between authoritative interpretation, as described above, and the interpretation which every believer is fully entitled to voice. Believers are free, indeed are encouraged, to study the Writings for themselves and to express their understanding of them. Such personal interpretations can be most illuminating, but all Bahá'ís, including the one expressing the view, however learned he may be, should realize that it is only a personal view and can never be upheld as a standard for others to accept, nor should contention ever be permitted to arise over differences in such opinions.

As to your reference to the perception of certain scholars that the opinions of the House of Justice are neither binding nor authoritative, the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are illuminating:

Let it not be imagined that the House of Justice will take any decision according to its own concepts and opinions. God forbid! The Supreme House of Justice will take decisions and establish laws through the inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit, because it is in the safekeeping and under the shelter and protection of the Abhá Beauty, and obedience to its decisions is a bounden and essential duty and an absolute obligation, and there is no escape for anyone.

(Published in Wellspring of Guidance: Messages 1963–1968 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1976), pp. 84–5)

The House of Justice trusts that these comments will assist you to arrive at the clarification you seek, and it assures you of its prayers in the Holy Shrines on your behalf.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

The Universal House of Justice's Power of Elucidation by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice published in Messages from the Universal House of Justice: 1963-1986, The Third Epoch of the Formative Age, pages 645-6 Wilmette, IL: US Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1996 first written or published 1984-10-25 To an individual Bahá'í

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

[412.1] The Universal House of Justice has received your letter dated 4 September 1984 in which you seek further clarification about the qualitative difference between the Guardian's prerogative of interpretation and the power of elucidation of the Universal House of Justice, and raise questions about other aspects of the Teachings. We are directed to convey the following comments.

[412.2] As you are aware, the Universal House of Justice has written three major messages which explain, among other things, the duties and functions shared by the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice, and those functions that are unique to each specific Institution. These messages are published in Wellspring of Guidance, pp. 44-56, and pp. 81-91, and in Messages of the Universal House of Justice 68-73, pp. 37-44.1 In relation to their specific functions, Shoghi Effendi explained that "it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the Word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating in matters not expressly revealed in the teachings."2

[412.3] [The use of the term "elucidation" by the Universal House of justice and the process by which it is implemented are based on passages in the Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá and statements in the writings of the Guardian. For example, in the Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states: [412.3a] It is incumbent upon these members (of the Universal House Of Justice) to ... deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book . . . and bear upon daily transactions, . . . (p. 20) page 646

[412.3b] Further, in response to a question raised by the American National Spiritual Assembly about the Universal Court of Arbitration, the Guardian in a letter dated 9 April 1923, defined such explanation as being in the domain of the Universal House of Justice and anticipated its function of elucidation: [412.3c] ... regarding the nature and scope of the Universal Court of Arbitration, this and other similar matters will have to be explained and elucidated by the Universal House of Justice, to which, according to the Master's explicit Instructions, all important fundamental questions must be referred.... (Bahá'í Administration, P. 47) [412.4] In a letter dated 9 March 1965, the Universal House of Justice stresses the "profound difference" that exists between the "interpretations of the Guardian and the elucidations of the House of Justice in exercise of its function to 'deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure, and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book."' (Wellspring of Guidance, p. 52) Among these is the outlining of such steps as are necessary to establish the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh on this earth. The elucidations of the Universal House of Justice stem from its legislative

function, while the interpretations of the Guardian represent the true intent inherent in the Sacred Texts. The major distinction between the two functions is that legislation with its resultant outcome of elucidation is susceptible of amendment by the House of Justice itself, whereas the Guardian's interpretation is a statement of truth which cannot be varied.

[412.5] Shoghi Effendi has given categorical assurances that neither the Guardian nor the Universal House of Justice "can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other." 3 Therefore, the friends can be sure that the Universal House of Justice will not engage in interpreting the Holy Writings. . . . With loving greetings, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE Notes 412-1. The three messages are included in this volume; see 9 March 1965 (no. 23), 27 May 1966 (no, 35), and 7 December 1969 (no. 75). 412-2. WOB, pp. 149-50. 412-3. WOB, pp. 149-50.

Comments

August 28. On this date in 1934, the Most Great Name symbol was registered as a trademark (Trade-Mark 316,444). Similarly, the "Bahá'í" trademark (Trade-Mark 245,271) was registered with the Patent Office on August 7, 1928. These trademarks have not prevented the use of the term "Bahá'í" by ...

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 28. On this date in 1934, the Most Great Name symbol was registered as a trade-mark (Trade-Mark 316,444). Similarly, the "Bahá'í" trademark (Trade-Mark 245,271) was registered with the Patent Office on August 7, 1928. These trademarks have not prevented the use of the term "Bahá'í" by groups considered Covenant-breakers by the Bahá'í Administrative Order, as upheld in repeated failed litigation. As early as 1941, the New York Supreme Court dismissed a court case brought by National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab for the use of the word "Bahá'í." The judge granted a motion to dismiss, stating that "the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion..."

Comments

August 28. On this date in 1965, the UHJ wrote "Learning of the victories achieved by the valiant souls who have arisen to serve Bahá'u'lláh can inspire others and can create a sense of world perspective which raises one's sights above his own petty pre-occupations..."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 28. On this date in 1965, the UHJ wrote "The importance of communicating the progress of the Faith to every individual believer can hardly be over-emphasized. Learning of the victories achieved by the valiant souls who have arisen to serve Bahá'u'lláh can inspire others and can create a sense of world perspective which raises one's sights above his own petty pre-occupations and makes being a Bahá'í more meaningful and purposeful."

140. Each Believer Should Have Access to Communications from World Centre of His Faith

"The importance of communicating the progress of the Faith to every individual believer can hardly be over-emphasized. Learning of the victories achieved by the valiant souls who have arisen to serve Bahá'u'lláh can inspire others and can create a sense of world perspective which raises one's sights above his own petty pre-occupations and makes being a Bahá'í more meaningful and purposeful.

"Each believer should have access, for example, to the communications from the World Centre of his Faith--the Messages from the Universal House of Justice and the Hands of the Cause as well as news emanating from the World Centre."

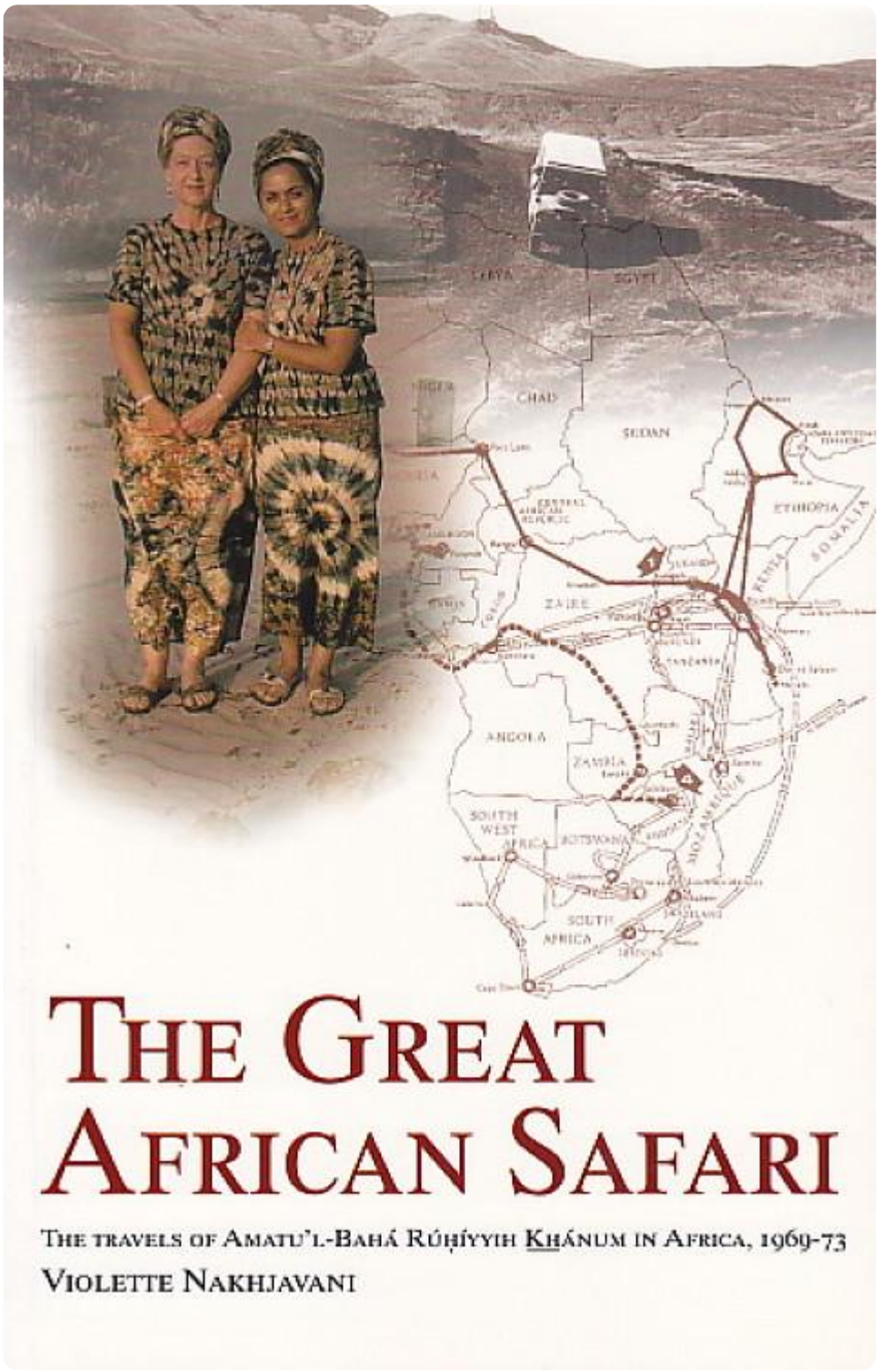
(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to National Spiritual Assemblies in Latin America, Africa and the South Pacific, August 28, 1965)

Comments

August 28. On this date in 1969, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum began to visit "the Bahá'í communities on the coast between Mombasa and Malindi which are mainly composed of members of the famous Giriama tribe."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

August 28. On this date in 1969, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum began to visit "the Bahá'í communities on the coast between Mombasa and Malindi which are mainly composed of members of the famous Giriama tribe," during one of her many travels, as documented in Violette Nakhjavani's *The Great Safari of Hand of the Cause Rúhíyyih Khánum*. From Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957 until her own death in 2000, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum traveled to over 185 countries and territories.


LIBYA
EGYPT
CHAD
SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
SOMALIA
KENYA
ZAIRE
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
SOUTH WEST AFRICA
BOTSWANA
SOUTH AFRICA
THE GREAT AFRICAN SAFARI
THE TRAVELS OF AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚḤÍYYIH KHÁNUM IN AFRICA, 1969-73
VIOLETTE NAKHJAVANI

Comments

August 28. On this date in 2012, an email asked the UHJ about statements by Hartmut Grossmann that “The lesser peace will be established by 2021 when world leaders recognize that only the Baha’is offer a world system established all over the world which is service-minded and concerned for all....”

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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Hartmut Grossmann, Remarks of, Concerning the Timing of the Lesser Peace 2012-10-22 1. Letter to the House of Justice Subject: Enquiry concerning remarks of Mr. Hartmut Gross-mann concerning the timing of the Lesser Peace August 28, 2012 Dear Secretariat,

A document has been circulating on the Internet [e.g. here] dated June 2012 purporting to be notes of Mr Hartmut Grossman from presentations at the Swedish Baha’i Winter school, notes prepared by David Maytan.

Specifically these notes appear to represent or confirm the views of the Universal House of Justice on the timing of the Lesser Peace, to be established by the year 2021: For instance:

"During Mr. Grossmann's opening remarks, he mentioned that he had a consultation with the Universal House of Justice about what he would be allowed to share with the Friends at the German and Swedish Winter Schools. All that he will say comes from the Writings, the messages of the Universal House of Justice and his consultation with the Universal House of Justice. Remember that Mr. Grossmann was a member of the Universal House of Justice from 2005-2010 and a member of the ITC 20 years before that. He stated that The Lesser Peace will be established by 2021 (war forbidden) and that by then the leaders of the world will gather to investigate alternatives after a period of great suffering and will turn to the Baha'is to reorganize the world as the Baha'i Faith has shown only to be of service to mankind and is established around the world. The troops will then come in even in greater numbers"

And "The lesser peace will be established by 2021 when world leaders recognize that only the Baha'is offer a world system established all over the world which is service-minded and concerned for all people's well-being." Could the Department of the Secretariat please confirm or deny the correctness of these views on the timing of the Lesser Peace and whether they are indeed held by the Universal House of Justice or are in fact just the personal private opinions of Mr. Grossmann or Mr. Maytan's portrayal of those remarks. We are aware of a number of letters of both the House of Justice and the Guardian which indicate that the date of the Lesser Peace is not and cannot be known.

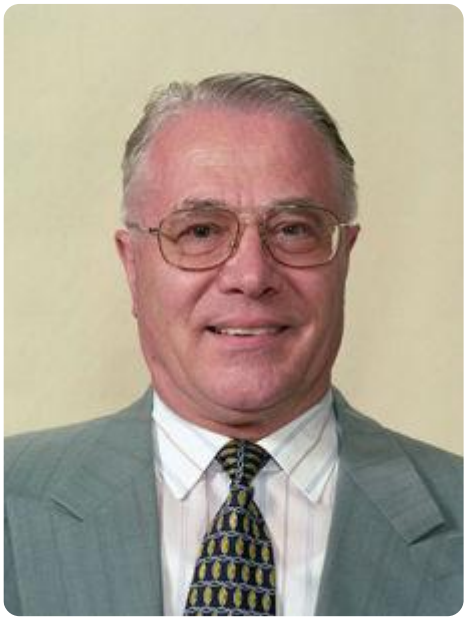
...

Response from the Universal House of Justice Transmitted by email 22 October 2012 Dear Bahá'í Friend,
Your email letter of 28 August 2012, forwarding notes taken by a believer of remarks purportedly made by Mr. Hartmut Grossmann concerning various topics including the date of the Lesser Peace during a talk he gave at a Bahá'í winter school, has been received at the Bahá'í World Centre and passed to our Office for reply. The following has been provided in response to a similar query posed to the Universal House of Justice about the same set of notes:

It is unclear whether the notes are accurate. Nevertheless, while the perspectives of former members of the Universal House of Justice are no doubt accorded a certain respect because of insights that derive from their experience, such views are to be regarded by their fellow believers as matters of personal opinion and weighed in light of the Teachings. With regard to the timing of the Lesser Peace, Shoghi Effendi stated, in a letter written on his behalf in 1946, "All we know is that the Lesser and the Most Great Peace will come—their

exact dates we do not know." (From a letter dated 19 March 2012 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)

With loving Bahá'í greetings, Office of Correspondence



Comments

Original Index: 29 | Current Position: 89

August 29. On this date in 1912, the Montreal Gazzette introduced "'Abdu'l-Bahá, who is 68 years old, is the centre of the Bahá'í movement, with a following in Persia, his native country, of three million people, while many thousands of others are to be found in India, Egypt and Turkey."

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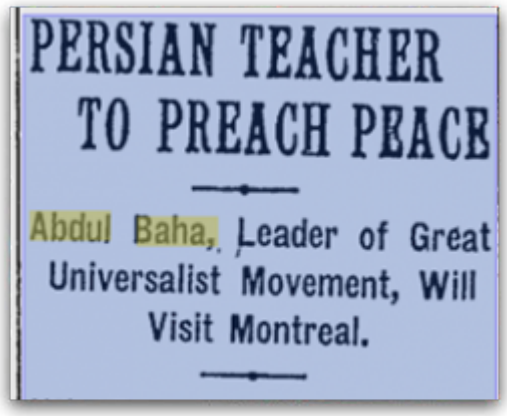
PERSIAN TEACHER
TO PREACH PEACE

Abdul Baha, Leader of Great Universalist Movement, Will Visit Montreal.

Comments

[–]A35821363[S]0 points1 point2 points1 month ago(0 children)

> August 29. On this date in 1912, the Montreal Gazzette introduced "'Abdu'l-Bahá, who is 68 years old, is the centre of the Bahá'í movement, with a following in Persia, his native country, of three million people, while many thousands of others are to be found in India, Egypt and Turkey."

August 29. On this date in 1983, the government of Iran banned the Bahá'í Administrative Order, preventing formation of LSAs and the participation of individual Bahá'ís in administrative activities.

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August 29. On this date in 1983, the government of Iran banned the Bahá'í Administrative Order, preventing formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies and the participation of individual Bahá'ís in administrative activities. It always surprised me that Bahá'ís in the community that I was a member of would regularly travel to Iran in the 1980's and 1990's to visit relatives in Iran.

The Universal House of Justice on 13 September 1983 communicated this information to the Bahá`í world by cable in these words:

`SORELY TRIED COMMUNITY GREATEST NAME IRAN HAS IN RECENT DAYS SUSTAINED YET ANOTHER CRUEL BLOW OPENING NEW CHAPTER ITS TURBULENT HISTORY. ON 29 AUGUST UNPRECEDENTED MOVE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT THROUGH STATEMENT ISSUED ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNOUNCED BAN BAHA'I ADMINISTRATION, RECITING USUAL FALSE ACCUSATIONS STATING EXISTENCE ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALLY CONSIDERED TO BE AGAINST LAWS CONSTITUTION COUNTRY. HOWEVER STATEMENT SAID BAHA'IS MAY PRACTICE BELIEFS AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS PROVIDED THEY DO NOT TEACH OR INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN FAITH, THEY DO NOT FORM ASSEMBLIES OR HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH ADMINISTRATION. SERVING IN BAHA'I ADMINISTRATION NOW SPECIFIED AS CRIMINAL ACT. THIS LATEST ONSLAUGHT MERCILESS COMMUNITY CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED IMPLACABILITY FANATICAL ELEMENTS IN THEIR DRIVE SUPPRESS LIGHT GOD'S INFANT FAITH IN LAND ITS FIRST GLEAMING...'

Comments

August 30. On this date in 1851, Bahá'u'lláh visited Karbala, where Muhammad's grandson Husayn is buried. "Imam Husayn has, as attested by the Iqan, been endowed with special grace and power among the Imams, hence the mystical reference to Bahá'u'lláh as the return of Imam Husayn, meaning ..."

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Husayn plays a key role in the Bahá'í Faith, as a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi on July 30, 1941, to an individual believer affirmed:

1665. Clarification of Certain Issues Regarding Islam, the Imam Husayn, the Imamate, etc.

"Ali's appointment was clear to the Khalifs, who actually disregarded the Prophet's oral statements.

"The usurpation occurred immediately after the Prophet's death.

"Ali did not feel unqualified, but wished to avoid schism, which, unfortunately, could not be prevented.

"The schisms that have afflicted the religions preceding the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh establish its distinction from all previous Revelations, and single it out among all other Dispensations, as stated by Abdu'l-Bahá.

"The guidance vouchsafed to the Imams regarding the laws and institutions of Islam was absolute and unqualified. Their infallibility was derived directly from the Manifestation.

"The Bab's descent from the Imam Husayn is no doubt a proof of the validity of the Imam-ate. According to Nabil the dream the Bab had made him first conscious of His Revelation.

"The precedence of the name Husayn over Ali does establish the greatness of Imam Husayn.

"Imam Husayn has, as attested by the Iqan, been endowed with special grace and power among the Imams, hence the mystical reference to Bahá'u'lláh as the return of Imam Husayn, meaning the Revelation in Bahá'u'lláh of those attributes with which Imam Husayn had been specifically endowed.

"Joseph was one of the 'Sent Ones' of the Qur'an, meaning a Manifestation of God.

"The friends should uphold Islam as a revealed Religion in teaching the Cause but need not make, at present, any particular attempt to teach it solely and directly to non-Bahá'ís at this time.

"The mission of the American Bahá'ís is, no doubt, to eventually establish the truth of Islam in the West.

"The spirit of Islam, no doubt, was the living germ of modern Civilization; which derived its impetus from the Islamic culture in the Middle Ages, a culture that was the fruit of the Faith of Muhammad."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 30, 1941)

Comments

August 30. On this date in 1911, Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí, also known as Vakílu'd-Dawlih ("Agent of the State") the chief financier of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ashgabat and an Afnán, died in Haifa. He was the first to be buried in the Haifa Bahá'í cemetery.

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Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí was born in 1830 in Shíráz. After completing his studies at age 15, he went to Bushehr where he succeeded the Báb in his father's firm. He was in Búshihr when the Báb returned from his Hajj pilgrimage in 1845. In about 1854, he moved to Yazd where he married Bíbí Zahrá Bagum and sometime later married a second wife who brought a daughter named Maryam Bagum to the marriage.

In Yazd, his business prospered and reached as far as Hong Kong. As a leading merchant in town, he was appointed the consular agent for Russia, a position that afforded some protection from extortion by the Iranian officials. He was given the title Vakílu'd-Dawlih [agent of the state], but 'Abdu'l-Bahá named him Vakílu'l-Haqq [agent of God]. His cheerful and generous character won the respect of many, even though he was well known as a Bahá'í. He was on good terms with all the governors of Yazd, many of whom consulted him about their affairs. The following is recorded by Muhammad-Táhir Malmírí, who was a close associate of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih:

One of the divine blessings bestowed upon the friends in Yazd was that a large number of the illustrious Afnáns of the sacred Lote-Tree lived in that city. It is beyond the ability of my

pen and tongue to recount their qualities. Even though outwardly these sanctified beings did not teach the Faith to others, yet they conducted themselves in Yazd with such goodly character and impressive behavior that, truly, this ephemeral servant cannot describe their vast influence. This luminous company and divine symbol of guidance was the cause of recognition for large numbers in Yazd. High and low have testified that these blessed persons were the effulgent signs, radiant proofs, and sanctified emblems of the Cause. They were the essence of chastity, faithfulness, and wisdom; and, even though they would not openly speak of the Faith or admit affiliation with the Cause, all the inhabitants of Yazd were certain that they were among the Bahá'ís and the Afnán of the sacred and divine Tree, and none dared be presumptuous towards them.

All the Afnáns had offices in the Saray-i Khajih and controlled the city's commerce. However, they conducted themselves in such a way that learned and unlettered, peasants and noblemen, young and old would freely say, "These men are indeed heavenly angels. They are worthy of their station as descendants of the Prophet of Islam. We are not concerned with their [current] beliefs because of their holy lineage."

The honored Hájí Mírzá Hasan-'Alí, who was an uncle of the Báb, would frequently attend the mosque and offer [Muslim] prayers. His three sons, Hájí Mírzá Áqá, Hájí Siyyid Mihdí, and Hájí Siyyid Husayn, each had a magnificent office, were pillars of commerce and employed a large staff of secretaries, accountants, attendants, and others. Despite their immense wealth and attainments, they were nevertheless very lowly and humble. It was truly astonishing and bewildering.

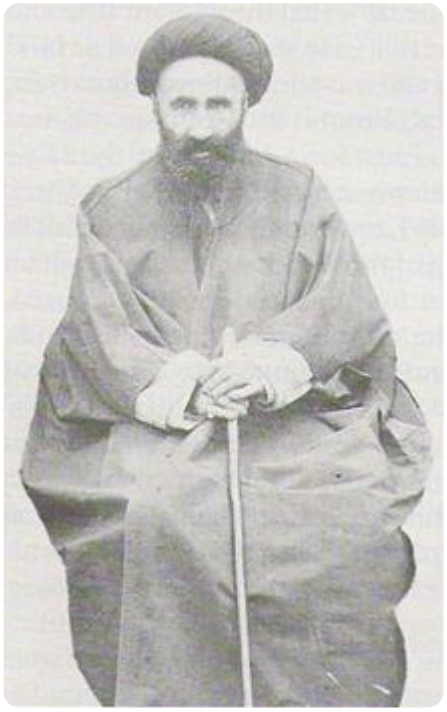
One of them was the honored Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí, the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, the official representative of the Russian government. He had won a special medal and displayed a flag over his house. Indeed, he was more accomplished than the others. He conducted himself with such tranquility, courtesy, humility, and selflessness, and dealt with people with such compassion, love, and equity, that when he passed through the streets, all the pedestrians would pause and, with great respect, defer to him, often bowing low before him. When a dispute took place between the merchants, they invariably would consider his word the final say and deciding factor. The day that he received a large golden emblem from the Russian government, several of the principal merchants happened to be his guests in his office. For two hours he wore that emblem, but never again. In His Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh has addressed him as, "O essence of respect!" In some other Tablets, he is addressed, "O essence of meekness!"

'Abdu'l-Bahá put Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí in charge of building the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ashgabat. Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí closed his business in Yazd and set out on April 4, 1900 for Russia. When he arrived in Mashhad en route, the authorities and prominent citizens warmly welcomed him. In their company, he went on pilgrimage to the shrine of the eighth Imám. For some time, people came to visit him, and this aroused the jealousy of the divines. They schemed to prevent him from entering the shrine for a second visit. However, on the appointed day, the custodian of the shrine, Nasiru'l-Mulk Shírází, was also going for a visit. He was an old friend of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, and, when he saw his friend, he deferred to him and showed him great consideration. Through this incident, not only were the opponents frustrated but also was the Nasiru'l-Mulk able to renew his friendship. Over the course of several meetings with the Vakílu'd-Dawlih, he became a believer. When the Vakílu'd-Dawlih arrived in 'Ishqábád, he supervised the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, using the plans and instructions sent by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and paying much of the cost himself. By 1906, the building was almost complete.

In mid-1900, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to him confidentially about the troubles that surrounded Him in the Holy Land and instructed him to form the Universal House of Justice in the event of His slaying:

As to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, He is now in very great danger, beset by countless grave perils. Therefore, you must arise with the greatest strength and steadfastness and gather the Afnán of the divine Lote-Tree together. By this is meant that you must unite them in spirit and purpose, and let them join in harmony and concord with the Hands of the Cause, so that the Universal House of Justice may be formed as far as this is practicable and the provisions of the Will and Testament can be implemented when this is necessary. It is incumbent upon the Afnán of the holy Tree to stand in the forefront and to shield and protect the mighty stronghold of the Cause of God. In this way, they will become the recipients of such favors as will benefit the station that has been graciously conferred upon them.

Some time later, Vakílu'd-Dawlih settled in Haifa. 'Abdu'l-Bahá remembered him as "an uncommonly happy man" and ranked him as one of the 24 elders mentioned in the Book of Revelation. He died in Haifa on August 30, 1911 at the age of 81 and was the first to be buried in the Haifa Bahá'í cemetery. 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed two Tablets of Visitation in his honor



Comments

August 30. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The friends...should not feel bewildered, for they have the assurance of Bahá'u'lláh that whatever the nature and character of the forces of opposition facing His Cause, its eventual triumph is indubitably certain."

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(In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 30 August 1937 to an individual believer)

Comments

August 31. On this date in 1868, the ship carrying Baha'u'llah and his companions arrived in Haifa.

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As document in Chapter 10 of William Sears' book *The Prisoner and the Kings*, titled *Akka*...

On August 21, 1868, Baha'u'llah and His companions were taken on board an Austrian-Lloyd steamer bound for the Holy Land. The ship touched first at Modelli and Smyrna. At Alexandria, Baha'u'llah was transferred to another ship which stopped at Port Said and Jaffa.

On August 31, the vessel arrived at the port of Haifa. It anchored at sea below the foot of Mount Carmel, the "nest of the Prophets" and the "vinyard of God."

The Glory of God had come home at last!

Comments

August 31. On this date in 1987, the UHJ announced plans for development of buildings on the Arc and Terraces in Haifa asking for "a reserve of fifty million dollars" and "an income of between twenty and twenty-five million dollars for the Bahá'í International Fund for each of the next ten years.

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August 31. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice announced plans for development of buildings on the Arc and Terraces in Haifa asking for "a reserve of fifty million dollars" and "an income of between twenty and twenty-five million dollars for the Bahá'í International Fund for each of the next ten years" but adding "It is impossible at this stage to give an accurate estimate of the cost of these projects."

The Universal House of Justice

31 August 1987

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world

Beloved Friends,

Nigh on one hundred years ago, Bahá'u'lláh walked on God's Holy Mountain and revealed the Tablet of Carmel, the Charter of the World Center of His Faith, calling into being the metropolis of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Through decades of oppression and expansion, persecution and emancipation, His followers have successfully labored to carry His message to the remotest regions of the earth, to erect the structure of His Administrative Order, and to proclaim to mankind the divinely prescribed cure for all its ills. In the past

eight years the agonies suffered by His lovers in Iran have awakened the interest of a slumbering world and have brought His Faith to the center of human attention.

On this same Mount Carmel ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, with infinite pains, raised the Mausoleum of the Báb on the spot chosen by His Father, and laid to rest within its heart the sacred remains of the Prophet Herald of the Faith, establishing a Spiritual Center of immeasurable significance. In accordance with the same divine command, Shoghi Effendi embellished the Shrine with an exquisite shell and then, under its protecting wing, began the construction of the Administrative Center of the Faith, to comprise five buildings in a harmonious style of architecture, standing on a far-flung Arc centering on the Monuments of the Greatest Holy Leaf, her Mother and Brother. The first of these five buildings, the International Archives, was completed in the beloved Guardian’s lifetime. The second, the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, now stands at the apex of the Arc. Plans for the remaining three were prepared in fulfillment of a goal of the Seven Year Plan, and are now being detailed.

As indicated in our letter of 30 April 1987, the way is now open for the Bahá’í world to erect the remaining buildings of its Administrative Center, and we must without delay stride forward resolutely on this path.

Five closely related projects demand our attention: the erection of the three remaining buildings on the Arc and, added now to these, the construction of the terraces of the Shrine of the Báb and the extension of the International Archives Building. A brief description of each of these will convey an impression of their significance for the Faith.

The Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb. In His plans for the development of Mount Carmel, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá envisaged nineteen monumental terraces from the foot of the mountain to its crest, nine leading to the terrace on which the Shrine of the Báb itself stands, and nine above it. These plans were often referred to by Shoghi Effendi, and he completed in preliminary form the nine terraces constituting the approach to the Shrine from the central avenue of the former German Templar Colony.

The International Teaching Centre will be the seat of that institution which is specifically invested with the twin functions of the protection and propagation of the Cause of God. The institution itself, referred to by the beloved Guardian in his writings, was established in June 1973, bringing to fruition the work of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land and providing for the extension into the future of functions with which that body had been endowed.

The Center for the Study of the Texts. This building will be the seat of an institution of Bahá'í scholars, the efflorescence of the present Research Department of the World Center, which will assist the Universal House of Justice in consulting the Sacred Writings, and will prepare translations of and commentaries on the authoritative texts of the Faith.

The International Archives Building. We have decided to construct, westwards, an extension to the basement of the present Archives Building to provide accommodation for the central office of the ever-growing Archives at the World Center. This institution is charged with responsibility for the preservation of the Sacred Texts and Relics and the historic documents of the Cause of God.

The International Bahá'í Library. This Library is the central depository of all literature published on the Faith, and is an essential source of information for the institutions of the World Center on all subjects relating to the Cause of God and the conditions of mankind. In future decades its functions must grow, it will serve as an active center for knowledge in all fields, and it will become the kernel of great institutions of scientific investigation and discovery.

It is impossible at this stage to give an accurate estimate of the cost of these projects. All that we can now say is that in the immediate future two objectives have to be met: to accumulate rapidly a reserve of fifty million dollars on which plans for the construction can realistically begin to be implemented, and to provide an income of between twenty and twenty-five million dollars for the Bahá'í International Fund for each of the next ten years. As the work proceeds, contracts are signed and costs can be accurately determined, further information will be announced.

The great work of constructing the terraces, landscaping their surroundings, and erecting the remaining buildings of the Arc will bring into being a vastly augmented World Center structure which **will be capable of meeting the challenges of coming centuries and of the tremendous growth of the Bahá'í community which the beloved Guardian has told us to expect.** Already we see the effect of the spiritual energies which the completion of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice has released, and the new impulse this has given to the advancement of the Faith. Who can gauge what transformations will be effected as a result of the completion of each successive stage of this great enterprise? ** The Faith advances, not at a uniform rate of growth, but in vast surges, precipitated by the alternation of crisis and victory.** In a passage written on 18 July 1953, in the early months of the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi, referring to the vital need to ensure through the teaching work a "steady flow" of "fresh recruits to the slowly yet steadily advancing army

of the Lord of Hosts," stated that this flow would "presage and hasten the advent of the day which, as prophesied by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, will witness the entry by troops of peoples of divers nations and races into the Bahá'í world." This day the Bahá'í world has already seen in Africa, the Pacific, in Asia and in Latin America, and this process of entry by troops must, in the present plan, be augmented and spread to other countries for, as the Guardian stated in this same letter, it "will be the prelude to that long-awaited hour when a mass conversion on the part of these same nations and races, and as a direct result of a chain of events, momentous and possibly catastrophic in nature and which cannot as yet be even dimly visualized, will suddenly revolutionize the fortunes of the Faith, derange the equilibrium of the world, and reinforce a thousandfold the numerical strength as well as the material power and the spiritual authority of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh." This is the time for which we must now prepare ourselves; this is the hour whose coming it is our task to hasten.

At this climacteric of human history, we are called upon to rise up in sacrificial endeavor, our eyes on the awe-inspiring responsibilities which such developments will place upon Bahá'í institutions and individual believers in every land, and our hearts filled with unshakeable confidence in the guiding Hand of the Founder of our Faith. That our Beloved Lord will arouse His followers in every land to a mighty united effort is our ardent prayer at the Sacred Threshold.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

August 31. On this date in 1987, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The Faith advances, not at a uniform rate of growth, but in vast surges, precipitated by the alternation of crisis and victory."

submitted1 month agobyA35821363

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Comments